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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER CULTURAL COMPETENCY
AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Erin Nicole Robinson

June 2012

Advisor: Kent Seidel

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Title: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER CULTURAL COMPETENCY
AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Advisor: Kent Seidel

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Abstract

This exploratory study investigated teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement within international high schools located in Hong Kong. Cultural competency is defined as a combination of knowledge about cultural groups as well as attitudes towards and skills for dealing with cultural diversity (Betancourt, 2003). The literature indicates that cultural competency will continue to play an increasingly important role in the professional work place as culturally diverse people become more interdependent. When examining the classroom experience, cultural competency equates to a teacher's ability to successfully instruct and engage culturally different students.

The students in this study reported over 30 different nationalities. Many of these students were internationally mobile and lived outside of their home country for a significant portion of their lives. As Third Culture Kids, these students grew up between cultures and reflect our global society (Pollock & Van Reken, 1999). In turn, the teachers in these international schools worked with a culturally diverse population of students. An unsubstantiated assumption follows that as educators increase their cultural competency, student engagement and achievement also increases. Thus, this study sought to determine if a relationship exists between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement.

The study involved 70 high school teachers and 520 high school students within two international schools in Hong Kong. Two survey instruments were used to measure teacher cultural competency and student engagement. The Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (Culhane-Pera, et al., 1997) measures cultural competency along three subconstructs: knowledge, skills and attitude. The Student Engagement Survey (Skinner, 1991) measures a four factor model of engagement. A quantitative analysis determined several salient findings. International school teacher perceptions of their cultural competency are primarily in an ethnorelative frame. The study also revealed that teacher self-reported cultural competency does not have a significant correlation with student engagement. However, students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency does bear a strong positive relationship with student engagement.

This study has ramifications for both educators and researchers. There are recommendations for instructional practice and school leadership. As a foundational study, additional research is required to further explore the impact of teachers' cultural competency on student success.

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Reflecting on the last seven years, I'm astounded at everything that has unfolded. I began my career as a school administrator, changed jobs three times, worked alongside an unbelievable mentor, lost my grandfather and my precious dog, moved overseas, married an incredible man, learned to surf, adopted two cherished pets, and traveled to 12 countries. Throughout it all, the DU learning community has been remarkable. I am genuinely blessed with the education and life lessons I've received over the last 13 years.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Deference to the physical superlative, a preference for the scent of our clan: a thousand anachronisms dance down the strands of our DNA from a hidebound tribal past, guiding us toward the glories of survival, and some vainglories as well. If we resent being bound by these ropes, the best hope is to seize them out like snakes by the throat, look them in the eye and own up to the venom.

(Kingsolver, 1995)

Statement of the Problem

For the first time in human history, our world is a shared space. Globalization is firmly a part of our reality, with its opportunities for increased collaboration and inherent challenges. We live, work and socialize with an increasing number of people who are different from ourselves and in a multitude of contexts (Banks, 2011). Today's social fabric is interwoven with a rich diversity of cultures. Many of these cultural groups had no reason to interact thirty years ago and are now working towards the realization of a pluralistic society.

The development of cultural competency models mirrors the rapid expansion of social globalization. Modern technology, improved communications, advanced transportation systems, and the drive to push economic boundaries accelerate worldwide collaborations and also spark culturally based conflicts. Today, professionals feel a palpable sense of urgency to bring cultural competencies into the workplace in order to successfully serve a diverse clientele. There are strong implications for culturally

competent practices in education, which provides the rationale for a closer study within international schools.

Deciphering the innate characteristics of culture and our enmeshed sense of self is essential to understanding the complexities of cultural competency. Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) established much of the literature that supports the current conceptualization of culture. His foundational work in developmental psychology continues to influence diverse disciplines such as the social sciences, business, and medical fields. Through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, we see that culture profoundly impacts all human systems. The relationships that people develop with their natural, social and built environments are either directly or indirectly influenced by culture (Banks, et al., 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Segall, 2003; Zoller Booth & Nieto, 2010). Simply stated, it is impossible for people to be devoid of culture (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003).

Culture is the lens through which we view, interact, and make meaning of the world. It plays an integral role in shaping our beliefs and the behaviors that we feel are socially appropriate. Yet, people are typically unaware of how their cultural lens provides for a world view that may differ from someone else (Nuñez, 2000). In particular, members of the dominant culture are challenged to understand the existence of non-dominant cultural lenses. As socially privileged people, they often mistake the dominant cultural lens as the *only* lens through which people experience the world.

Given the highly interconnected nature of today's world, a static view of culture is unrealistic. Both globalization and the efforts to develop global citizenship contribute to a

renewed view of culture (Banks, 2011). The more contemporary perspective includes the adaptability and fluidity of culture. These ideals gained momentum following Elise Boulding's (1988) introduction of a "global civic community." Over the last twenty years, contemporary literature in business, education, politics and social discourse point to an increasingly global community. We see pluralistic communities with ubiquitous cross-cultural characteristics emerging from the overlap of local, national and international communities. "Globalization has made it unlikely that any one group will remain completely isolated or that individuals within that group share the same beliefs and attitudes" (Boutin-Foster, Foster, & Konopasek, 2008).

Moreover, the continual change within a global society accentuates the malleable aspect of culture. Culture is dynamic. It is constantly in flux and influenced by various social and environmental factors (Boutin-Foster et al., 2008). Globalization is a relatively new phenomenon that has sparked a growing desire to examine the intricacies of culture. Researchers are finding that the exploration into the complexity of culture and the role it plays among groups and individuals is inexhaustible. Featherstone (1990) describes the impact of globalization on culture:

This globalization process which points to an extension of global interrelatedness can be seen as leading to a global ecumene ... A process whereby a series of cultural flows produce both: *firstly*, cultural homogeneity and cultural disorder, in linking together previously isolated pockets of relatively homogeneous culture which in turn produces more complex images of the other as well as generating identity-reinforcing reactions; and also *secondly*, transnational cultures, which can be understood as genuine third cultures which are oriented beyond national boundaries.

Globalization redefines cultural identities. As Featherstone points out, cultural norms may fluctuate but they also profoundly influence the way an individual perceives culturally different people. This requires a new understanding of culture and strategies to manage cultural difference.

Scholars have generated models to explain the negotiation of cultural differences for as long as diverse people have lived and worked together. Early cross cultural adaptation models arose from a range of social imperatives and theoretical backgrounds. Educators involved with international school exchanges, humanitarians, business professionals and politicians drove these models because they worked intentionally with people from profoundly different cultures. Cross cultural adaptation then evolved into several comprehensive cross cultural frameworks. “Cross cultural awareness”, “cultural literacy”, “cultural intelligence” and “intercultural communication” describe the initial efforts in grappling with cultural difference. The cultural competency construct emerged out of this earlier work and is a cornerstone of this study.

In recent years, the moral imperative for intercultural work has shifted to include a more pragmatic purpose. Pioneers in the cultural competency field were drawn to the work because they felt an ethical obligation to address equity issues and viewed multicultural training as a noble cause (Moule, 2012). Today, there is both a sense of moral responsibility and a practical need to function effectively in a globalized society. Since people work in increasingly diverse settings, cultural competency is necessary to function successfully with colleagues, clients, and neighbors (Banks, 2004). In this study,

cultural competence is viewed as a “set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals that enable a system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (Cross, et al., 1988). This is not a new idea. However, there is a greater sense of urgency to develop cultural competency because we are functioning in increasingly diverse environments. For example, supervisors expect that employees are effective in cross-cultural interactions. Therefore, those that grew up in culturally homogeneous environments must acquire the skills to successfully work with culturally different people.

The emergence of a cultural competency framework is a departure from the diversity training model established in the latter decades of the twentieth century. In more conventional multicultural and diversity training, professionals emphasized learning discrete cultural characteristics to further their academic knowledge. The purpose was to increase the effectiveness of multicultural interactions through the knowledge of cultural groups’ distinct characteristics. However, in many ways it served to reinforce the dominant culture. Advances in intercultural training now embrace an awareness of one’s own cultural identity, recognizing how culture influences perceptions of the world, and understanding the cultural history and identity of people. A key component of this model involves learning how historical marginalization and oppression still shapes the experiences of culturally different people.

Social science and business research go on to clarify that both professional and personal growth are necessary to increase cultural competency (Boutin-Foster et al.,

2008). This involves a two fold process. First, one establishes a tangible understanding of how their own culture influences their actions. Second, one develops the skills to easily and respectfully move among and between diverse cultures (Banks, et al., 2001; Betancourt, 2003; Burchum, 2002; Diller & Moule, 2005; Lindsey et al., 2003; Nuñez, 2000). The development of cultural competency requires people to take a close look at themselves and then develop the requisite professional skills.

Studies indicate that cultural competency is progressive in nature and describes an individual's development from an ethnocentric to ethnorelative stage of cultural understanding (Bennett, 1999; Cross et al., 1989). Milton J. Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) provides the foundation for today's models of cultural competency, cultural proficiency and cross-cultural efficacy. This model describes six measurable stages of intercultural development by quantifying an individual's response to cultural difference. Fundamentally, this model suggests that an individuals' intercultural sensitivity is fluid and likely to change over time (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003).

A wealth of intercultural sensitivity and cultural competency research exists in social work, psychology, and the medical arena. Yet, cultural competency studies have only recently gained momentum in education and are contextualized within North America. The literature typically focuses on adult populations, emphasizes intercultural sensitivity within the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) framework, and examines intercultural communication of the professional provider.

Furthermore, studies within the United States K12 arena seek to address the alarming disparities in academic achievement, the challenges that White, middle class teachers find in teaching students of color and students of a lower socioeconomic status, and increasing drop out rates (Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Straffon, 2001).

While Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993) served as a framework for studies on intercultural sensitivity, it also led to the emergence of several cultural competency models. The continual development of models serves as evidence of the on-going desire to understand the role of culture and cultural difference. The DMIS contributed to the foundation of the Cultural Proficiency model (Lindsey et al., 2003) and more recently, a cross-cultural efficacy framework (Nuñez, 2000). Each of these models attempts to explain cultural competency and offer developmental paths for professionals and organizations to increase their capacity.

Recent literature suggests that developing a culturally competent skill set is an *antecedent* to effective practice with a culturally diverse people. This is because it is not enough to simply possess the knowledge and skills. Professionals must also act upon those skills in a responsive manner. Randall B. Lindsey's, et al. (1999) Cultural Proficiency model suggests that cultural competency is not an endpoint. Rather, it is a developmental model composed of six stages that are associated with the ethnocentric and ethnorelative stages of Bennett's model. Cultural Proficiency is at the upper level of the continuum and requires that an individual go beyond the development of cultural

competences. Conceptually, there are strong similarities with the DMIS. However, the Cultural Proficiency model deepens the framework through the incorporation of guiding principles and actions.

As large organizations turn to cultural competency training as a means to address disparities in their practice, they are identifying the most efficient way to conduct training with their employees. Often, this takes the form of a mandatory training that touches the surface aspects of cultural competency. This professional development model faces the following challenges: differentiating according to individual needs, the necessity for deep trust among trainees, a requirement for training over time, and a desire that trainees become open to the possibility of changing their mindset. This type of training rarely delves into an expansive approach to the Cultural Proficiency model and to date has not shown favorable results.

In response, Ana E. Nuñez (2000) introduced the Cross-Cultural Efficacy model. This model brings the focus back to a comprehensive view of cultural competency. It incorporates several factors: individual cultural competency levels, responsiveness to the needs of the client and effectively interpreting cultural interactions (Kelly, 2008). Cross-Cultural Efficacy is an attempt to bring the literature and practice in line with the Cultural Proficiency model. It also places an emphasis on responsiveness. While the Cross-Cultural Efficacy model includes the necessary components of a substantial cultural competency model, it does not add any new elements. It simply rephrases the elements

that already exist within Lindsey's Cultural Proficiency model. Thus, this study uses the Cultural Proficiency model as its foundational framework.

In education, cultural competency is the ability to successfully teach in cross-cultural settings. Furthermore, Jean Moule (2012) describes cultural competence in schools as "[the development of] certain personal and interpersonal awarenesses and sensitivities, learning specific bodies of cultural knowledge, and mastering a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching." The importance of incorporating cultural competencies in the classroom becomes apparent when globalization manifests itself in kindergarten through twelfth grade (K12) education. Since schools are a microcosm of the wider communities that they serve, educators are faced with shifting demographics, increased mobilization, and changing cultural dynamics within their classrooms. Both the educators' and students' cultural lenses affect the way in which instruction is contextualized and students make meaning from their learning. This requires that educators employ strong cultural competency skills to facilitate student learning. Moreover, educators need to examine their instructional practices and school policy to ensure that all student needs are met regardless of culture, background, or ability.

While culturally competent skills are vital in today's classrooms, they are not an innate set of characteristics. Rather, culturally competent knowledge, skills and attitudes are learned and intentionally implemented. Participation in training programs, embracing culturally responsive changes to their instruction and welcoming accountability for the

development of these skills allows teachers to improve upon their cultural competency. Just as teachers participate in professional development to become masters in curriculum and instruction, they need ongoing professional development to increase their cultural competency. However, this endeavor is atypical of most professional training processes because it involves both a cognitive shift and an emotional investment. Developing cultural competencies in classroom practice includes: reflecting on how your own culture influences your behavior, understanding how power and privilege affect your life and the lives of your students, attaining discrete intercultural skills, increasing cultural knowledge, effective verbal and nonverbal communication, and building expertise in culturally responsive pedagogy. Above all else, cultural competency requires unconditional positive regard for the diverse group of students and colleagues with whom a teacher interacts (Moule, 2012).

With that said, the correlation between an educator's cultural competency and student success is not well understood. The question remains whether a teacher's cultural competency prompts increased student success. Despite the heightened interest in educational literature, there is an overwhelming lack of research that examines the role that cultural competency plays in the classroom. A handful of studies focus on intercultural sensitivity and the effectiveness of cultural competency training programs (Gies, 2010; Marks, 2011; Pauley, 2008; Straffon, 1999; Westrick & Yuen, 2007). These studies conclude that teachers possess varying degrees of intercultural sensitivity and that training programs are less effective if they call for surface learning in a mandatory

participation format. In addition, Diane Wells-Rivers' (2011) study looked at the relationship between a mandated cultural competency training program and standardized reading scores. However, the results did not conclusively determine a correlation between cultural competency training and student achievement. Research that delves into the relationship between cultural competency and student success is a crucial step towards better understanding the cultural competency framework.

The present study is contextualized within an international school setting. International schools have a unique demographic and while they do not typically face achievement gap and drop out issues, effectively working with culturally diverse people is an unwavering reality for international educators. Many international schools are hierarchical institutions, created as the tendrils of a colonial presence continue to influence expatriate experiences. This poses an interesting interplay between the predominantly White, European approach to schooling and each student's distinctive cultural perspective. Like their North American counterparts, international schools deal with issues of race, ethnicity, power and oppression. If students are marginalized within a school and feel that they are *The Other*, the ability to reach their academic potential may be compromised (Banks, 2004). It follows that international teachers' cultural competency may directly influence learning and student success in multinational classrooms. In particular, this study seeks to measure international school educators' cultural competency and its relationship to student engagement.

International schools provide a unique opportunity for the development of relevant educational understandings and practice, such as cultural competency (Heyward, 2004). These schools were first established to provide an education for the children of foreign embassy personnel, missionaries, international business and military families, and developmental aid organizations. International schools are designed to educate the children of expatriates and draw together a community of people who choose to live in a foreign country. As members of an international school community, educators, students, and parents are exceedingly conscious of the need for culturally competent skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Most international schools were created for pragmatic reasons rather than on principles of an international education ideology or globalism (Matthews, 1989; Bartlett, 1998; Pearce, 1998). Ultimately, international schools provide a way for families to stay together as one or both parents obtain international postings. The schools were designed to provide continuity of specific national curricula and matriculate students into premier universities in their home countries. However, over the last thirty years, the international school context has shifted. The necessity of a single national curriculum and inclusion of a monocultural identity are no longer valid. Rather, international schools seek to develop a global identity and exercise best practices in educational research. In addition, the growth of multinational companies results in increased numbers of internationally mobile families who originate from a broader range of countries. International schools now reflect an even greater diversity than in years past.

Interestingly, research also shows that children who have grown up with a globally nomadic lifestyle are likely to become internationally mobile citizens in the future (Useem, 1979; Fail, 1996; Gerner & Perry, 2000). More professionals are seeking overseas employment and are choosing to raise their families with an international lifestyle. The demand for schools to educate expatriate children has caused an exponential growth in the number of international schools. This trend promises to carry on as long as multinational companies expand, globally nomadic children seek international lifestyles as adults, and globalization continues to reduce geographic barriers. In the international school environment, it is imperative that educators develop higher levels of cultural competency to meet the needs of their diverse student populations.

The vast majority of international schools tout the development of “global citizenship,” “international mindedness,” “intercultural awareness,” and “internationalism” in their mission statements. This makes sense within the context of increased globalization and a progressively diverse student body. Yet, it is equally important to examine how cultural diversity affects the teachers. International school teachers face a daily tri-cultural interaction between their own culture, the cultures of their students (which are often different from that of the teacher), and the school culture that surrounds them (Nuñez, 2000). Within this rich tapestry, there lies a pragmatic imperative for educators to embrace cultural competency as a means to effectively facilitate learning in their classrooms (Diller & Moule, 2005; Pai & Adler, 1997; Zoller

Booth & Nieto, 2010). However, few international school communities have a common understanding of global citizenship or what it means to be culturally competent.

Moreover, there is a deficit of articulated programs to support core beliefs in global citizenship. Similarly, few international schools offer methods to assess the development of these characteristics (Hayden & Wong, 1997; Allan, 2003). Simply choosing to live overseas and enjoying international travel does not mean that an individual is culturally competent (Straffon, 2001). To compound these issues, there are only a small number of research studies that explore global mindedness, intercultural sensitivity, or cultural competency in international schools.

David A. Straffon's (2001) research regarding intercultural sensitivity among international students and Jan A. Westrick's (2004) study on international school teachers' intercultural sensitivity both reveal that students and teachers within international schools possess high levels of intercultural sensitivity. This is a promising finding because intercultural sensitivity can be viewed as an attitudinal forerunner to successful intercultural experiences and a predictor of cultural competence (Altshuler, et al., 2003). Yet, these preliminary studies of intercultural sensitivity research in international schools only scratch the surface of educational cultural competency.

Though cultural competency is unquestionably a large and complex construct, it is both central to successful interactions between culturally diverse people as well as attainable. Educators believe that it is a pivotal factor in student success. Teachers must take into account their students' varied cultural perspectives and then incorporate that

knowledge with the appropriate communication style to develop rapport with culturally different students (Zoller Booth & Nieto, 2010). Through empirical evidence, researchers show that teachers can improve student success if they are knowledgeable and accepting of their students' cultures (Gay, 2000; Grant, Elsbree & Fondrie, 2004; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Further studies that explore the relationship between a teacher's cultural competence skill set and student success will further our understanding of the role cultural competency plays in the classroom.

Without doubt, student engagement plays an integral role in student success. Thus, student engagement is a widely researched component of schooling. We see a breadth of research that encompasses behavioral, cognitive and emotional engagement in schools. The primary impetus for engagement research is a reaction to significant dropout rates in North American schools. However, student engagement is a catalyst for a successful learning experience for all students. Student-teacher relationships, their interactions, teacher expectations, care and respect are all critical factors in developing strong student engagement. Within international schools, the student population may reflect upwards of 40 nationalities and teacher demographics typically include over 10 nationalities. This means that international school teachers share daily interactions with students and colleagues from a variety of backgrounds. It stands to reason that cultural competency is essential to an international school teacher's instructional practice.

At the outset of this study, research had yet to examine the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement. A limited number of

preliminary studies on intercultural sensitivity in international schools, using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) demonstrate that international school populations tend to operate in the ethnorelative range of intercultural sensitivity. This confirms the assumption that both international school teachers and students have higher levels of intercultural sensitivity due to the school environment (Straffon, 2001; Westrick & Yuen, 2007). In addition, Claudia Nieto and Margaret Zoller Booth's (2010) study of instructors and international students at a U.S. college confirm the positive relationship between instructors' cultural competence and international students' feelings of welcome and comfort in a foreign country. However, the research had yet to examine the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with cultural competency within an international K12 school setting. Nor had research quantified the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and student engagement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate teachers' levels of cultural competency and the relationship between teacher cultural competency and student engagement within two international high schools in Hong Kong. In doing so, the research identified international school teachers' levels of cultural competency and examines the relationship between the level of cultural competency and years of overseas instructional experience. Moreover, the study explored the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement.

International school teachers enter into the profession, seeking opportunities to work with students from a variety of cultural backgrounds. International school teachers may have a higher level of intercultural sensitivity, which is a predictor of cultural competency. However, the level at which international school teachers use cultural competency in their classroom practice is unknown. It is a common assumption that international school teachers draw upon a high level of cultural competency to provide culturally responsive instruction. Yet, to date, no research supports this belief.

The present study tested this assumption by using a modified Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) to quantify teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency. In addition, students in the school completed a Student Engagement Survey (SES), which examines factors that influence student engagement. The SES includes two components: engagement in the classroom and perception of their teacher's cultural competency. Questions were primarily drawn from the Dr. Ellen Skinner's (1991) Engagement versus Disaffection with Learning (EvsD) student-report survey. A modified section from the MAQ is included in the SES to measure students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency.

Research Questions

1. What are international school teachers' levels of cultural competency, as measured by a modified Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire?
2. Does a relationship exist between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency?

3. What is the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement in the international school setting?

Definition of Terms

Cross Cultural Efficacy: "Cross cultural efficacy signifies a practitioner's cultural competence as well as the responsiveness to the needs and cultural interpretation of the consumer of service" (Kelly, 2008).

Cultural Competence: "Cultural competence is generally defined as a combination of knowledge about certain cultural groups as well as attitudes towards and skills for dealing with cultural diversity" (Betancourt, 2003).

Cultural Competency (in education): "Cultural competency is the ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than your own. It entails mastering complex awarenesses and sensitivities, various bodies of knowledge, and a set of skills that, taken together, underlie effective cross-cultural teaching" (Moule, 2012).

Culturally Different: "Culturally different is used synonymously with cross-cultural or ethnic and implies that the student comes from a different culture than the teacher. It includes no value judgment about the superiority of one culture over the other - only that people have been socialized in very different ways and may find communication problematic." (Moule, 2012)

Culture: "We are usually unaware that we see the world differently from others. Culture shapes how we explain and value our world. It's the lens through which we give

our world meaning. Culture shapes our beliefs and influences our behaviors about what is appropriate” (Diller & Moule, 2005).

Ethnocentric: A perspective “that one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality in some way” (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Ethnorelative: A perspective “that one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures” (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Expatriate: “A manager or employee of a multinational company or government agency who has temporarily relocated to live and work in another country” (Gerner, Perry, Moselle, & Archbold, 1992).

Globalization: For the purpose of this study, globalization is defined as “...the widening, deepening and speeding up of global interconnectedness” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999).

Intercultural Sensitivity (ICS): “Sensitivity to the importance of cultural differences and to the points of view of people in other cultures” (Bhaskar & Brislin, 1992)

International School: “International schools are organizations located within communities of stakeholders and others with diverse interests that may be in competition. The students, and their parents, and the teaching staff, may come from a number of different countries and, depending on the school and its location, there may be either intimate or distant relations with the host country community. The school will be profoundly influenced, either positively or negatively, by the host environment within which it operates” (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

Student Engagement: Engagement is conceptualized as the “psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, investment and effort students expend in the work of learning” (Marks, 2000).

Third Culture Kid (TCK): “A Third Culture Kid [TCK] is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of a similar background” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009).

Significance of the Study

Globalization profoundly influences the demographics of schools, pedagogy, and even the overarching purpose of K12 schooling. Successful classroom educators must have a deep understanding of their own cultural perspective and biases, possess the skills to work with culturally diverse students, and incorporate culturally responsive instruction. At a policy level, international schools recognize this need and typically include statements regarding the development of global citizens in their mission statements. In practice, school community members rarely share a common understanding of what global citizenship is or how to develop students as global citizens. This is exacerbated by a tendency to view cultural difference from a cultural blindness perspective. Furthermore, few schools translate global citizenship into an articulated curriculum or common set of instructional practices that incorporate cultural competences.

The cultural diversity within international schools requires educators to successfully teach all students, regardless of their varied cultural identities. This hinges on a teacher's ability to put their own cultural perspective aside to address the needs of their students. Geneva Gay (2000) asserts that it is the teacher's moral responsibility to incorporate cultural competencies into their instructional practices:

If educators continue to be ignorant of, impugn, and silence the cultural orientations, values, and performance styles of ethnically different students, they will persist in imposing cultural hegemony, personal denigration, educational inequity, and academic achievement upon them.

This call to action requires that teachers move beyond merely embracing intercultural sensitivity and learn to respond effectively in multicultural teaching environments. Yet, cultural competency research within the international school setting is limited. The present research addresses the need for a deeper understanding of cultural competency and its relationship with student engagement within an international school setting.

This study establishes a set of empirical data, using a modified teacher MAQ along with the SES. The SES includes a modified MAQ section to measure students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency levels. The outcomes of this study expand upon initial intercultural sensitivity research by describing teacher cultural competency levels. A correlational analysis determined whether teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency are related to years of overseas teaching experience. In addition, the results explored the relationship between cultural competency and student engagement.

In our newly defined global context, it is critical that international schools examine cultural competency practices beyond intercultural sensitivity. A proliferation of international schools maintain North American and Western European frames of reference. They promote school-wide practices and policies with a largely White, Euro-American, upper-middle class cultural perspective. With a deeper understanding of the significance that cultural competency plays in the classroom, international schools may be better informed about the need to reshape their policies with an intercultural perspective.

Ultimately, this study contributes to cultural competency and student engagement theory, research and practice. In addition, it deepens international school research and equitable pedagogy. It is of significance to international school teachers, administrators, and professional development directors who are seeking ways to better the school experience for international school students.

Delimitations

This study included high school teachers and students who lived in Hong Kong during March 2012. The teachers and students chose the two schools within this study over other educational options within Hong Kong. The small sample size reduces the ability to generalize the findings of this research to a wider population.

The students and teachers in this study were provided an equal opportunity to participate. As a result, 70 teachers and 525 students completed the respective surveys. Whether the other 17 teachers and 304 students purposely decided not to participate is not

known. In addition, the students were required to return a Parental Consent form to participate. It may be that a student's lack of response is purposeful or because they forgot to return the consent form. The researcher was unable to determine the degree to which this may skew the results for the sample population. Rather, there is an assumption that all teachers and students were able and willing to participate in the study. In addition, it is assumed that the sample population is representative of international schools in Hong Kong.

The researcher chose to study this population because she lives in Hong Kong and works in the Middle School division of one of the schools. For this reason, the study employs a convenience sample.

Organization of the Study

This study's five-chapter framework, includes references and appendices. Chapter One introduces the study and provides the context and statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, definition of terms, significance of the study, and delimitations. Chapter Two provides an in-depth examination of the literature describing culture, cultural competency and student engagement research. In addition, Chapter Two examines international schools and Third Culture Kids to contextualize the study. Chapter Three addresses the research design and rationale for the methodology. This includes the sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study. Chapter Four describes the characteristics of the sample, a presentation of the results, and provides an analysis of the data. Chapter Five includes a

reflection on the major findings, contributions of the study to theory, research and practice. In addition, the limitations of the study are discussed and recommendations for further research are presented.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Being able to put aside one's self-centered focus and impulses has social benefits: It opens the way to empathy, to real listening, to talking about a person's perspective. Empathy ... leads to caring, altruism, and compassion. Seeing things from another's perspective breaks down biased stereotypes, and so breeds tolerance and acceptance of differences. These capacities are even more called on in our increasingly pluralistic society, allowing people to live together in mutual respect and creating the possibility of productive public discourse. These are the basic arts of democracy.

(Goleman, 1995)

Introduction

This review aims to evaluate the literature, which provides the context for this research study. Chapter two begins with a discussion of culture and the field of cultural competence. Through a brief historical context, we see that cultural competency work has emerged from efforts to integrate racial and ethnic groups, addressing social injustice, teaching for tolerance and more recently developing cultural competencies. Given the complexity of culture, the literature includes an array of models that describe the developmental nature of cultural competency. Each of the models show the progression from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative perspective. While they all seek to capture the development towards cultural competency, the Cultural Proficiency framework (Lindsey et al., 1999) serves as the conceptual structure of this study. The guiding principles, essential elements and connection to culturally responsive teaching are all discussed. From there, the literature on Cross-Cultural Efficacy as well as Alissa Mallow and Diann

Cameron-Kelly's meta-cultural competency model describe how cultural competency encompasses knowledge, attitude, skills and responsiveness.

The literature review also examines the characteristics of international schools, international school teachers and Third Culture Kids. While cultural competence research in international schools is scant, a few studies looked at the levels of intercultural sensitivity within international schools. These empirical studies reveal a promising trend for international educators because they demonstrate that international school teachers and students possess higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than peers in national based schools.

In addition, the literature suggests that learning is socially constructed. As such, culture plays a role in student success within schools. Culture influences teachers' pedagogy as well as student engagement. Studies indicate that increased levels of student engagement result in greater academic success. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the teacher to ensure high student engagement. The student engagement literature identifies a multidimensional framework for engagement. The teacher has a central role developing each aspect of student engagement within the classroom. The factors of student engagement include behavioral, emotional and cognitive. These three types of engagement are discussed along with behavioral disaffection and emotional disaffection. With the wealth of cultural diversity in international schools, this study aims to measure the relationship between a teacher's cultural competence and their students' engagement.

The Complex Nature of Culture

The characteristics of human groups and the inherent differences between people have fascinated scholars throughout history. Establishing the attributes of *we* and defining the characteristics of the *other* have preoccupied researchers for hundreds of years. The pursuit to define culture extends into a wide array of fields from anthropology to social psychology, sociology, communication theory, health, counseling, and education. Thus, we see a proliferation of more than 150 different definitions of culture (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). There are cultural experts across the disciplines. Yet, scholars have not come to a consensus on an exact definition of culture.

Much of the difficulty in defining culture can be found in its primary characteristic: culture is inextricably intertwined into the fabric of the human experience. It is always there, noticeable but beyond our awareness. Culture is so habituated into our daily lives that we have a difficult time disentangling ourselves to examine it with an objective lens. Moule (2005) asserts that, “Culture is so all-encompassing, like water to fish, that it remains largely preconscious and we only realize its presence when it’s gone or seriously disturbed.”

Moreover, scholars consistently disagree about the attributes of culture. Elaine Pinderhughes (1989) credits this dispute to the entanglement created around the intricate and systematic characterization of culture. Likewise, the literature reveals that studies related to culture developed in a fragmented manner because the methodological and

conceptual approaches are splintered. This review consolidates the expansive perspectives of culture and identifies the essential attributes that arise from the literature.

The etymology of culture can be traced back to a Middle French term that emerged around 1440, describing the tilling of land (Barnhart, 1988). The word “culture” was derived from the Latin, *cultūra*. *Cultūra* and *cult-* relate to the act of tending, care and cultivation. Primarily, the term described the care of plants. It was after Sir Thomas Moore’s work in the 1500s that the term took on a figurative meaning. Sir Thomas Moore used the word “culture” to illustrate the cultivation of one’s mind through education. This evolved into Wordsworth’s use of the word “cultural” to explain the intellectual and artistic components of civilizations in 1805. The word “culture” was first used in English to encapsulate the culture of the mind and manners in William Dwight Whitney’s (1875), *The Life and Growth of Language*.

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, a nineteenth century anthropologist, developed a definition of culture from which the modern meaning emerged. Tylor (1891) characterized culture as, ‘A complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man [sic] as a member of society.’ Although this perspective on culture is exceedingly superficial, this understanding of culture still drives the curriculum and instruction of most schools. It is not uncommon to see a social studies project where students report on the cultural food, dress, dance, and art of the people in a foreign country. In these projects, little is done to

address how the complexity of a person's culture influences their worldview and actions or develop the students' understanding of others (Seelye, 1993; Straffon, 2001).

Building upon the extrinsic qualities of culture, a second approach emphasizes the knowledge base that culture provides (Wurzel, 1988). In other words, some scholars view culture as a system of shared knowledge that is necessary for the survival of a group. Culture is defined through a group's adaptations to the physical and human environment, to ensure group survival (Lustig & Koester, 1999; Matsumoto, 1997). The shared cultural knowledge facilitates communication among its members and promotes the continuity of that particular group. Understandably, this view of culture tends to be geographically bound.

Although the aforementioned qualities of culture are more rigid than the contemporary perspective, they do suggest several characteristics that most scholars agree upon. Culture is a group dynamic and it is acquired. People do not become members of a culture by birth but rather through a process of learning. Culture seeks to preserve a society or a way of life. Since it is socially constructed, culture must change to satisfy the needs of the group. In actuality, culture emphasizes the social heredity of a group where new members must be taught the fundamental ideas, practices and experiences of a social group (Lustig & Koester, 1999; Matsumoto, 1997).

Clifford Geertz (1973) advances the construct of culture by elucidating its semiotic nature. Rather than categorizing a culture through fixed qualities, he urges scholars to view culture through a symbolic perspective. He suggests that, "Man is an

animal suspended in webs of significance that he himself has spun.” Geertz furthers this idea by describing culture as the end product of those webs. According to Geertz, culture is purely a human construct that’s left to interpretation. Therefore, the analysis of culture “is not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.” The reality of culture exists within our perception and interpretation of events, behavior, and phenomena. One cannot adequately capture the construct of culture because of its vast complexity and fluid nature.

Once established as a dynamic construct, scholars broadened the description to include the deep-rooted nature of culture. Alexander Leighton (1982) defines culture as a summation of the ways of living. These are developed by a group of human beings to meet biological and psychosocial needs. Together, these ways of living are an integrated whole. They consist of values, norms, beliefs, attitudes, folkways, behavior styles, worldviews and traditions. People integrate these attributes into their lives to provide structure and meaning (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Diller & Moule, 2005). If culture is the shared way of life for a group of people in an increasingly interconnected world, then cultures have the potential to emerge beyond geographic boundaries.

The iceberg analogy illustrated in Figure 1 shows the complex nature of culture. Cross-cultural literature and training material often use this model to demonstrate the difference between the surface and deep characteristics of culture.

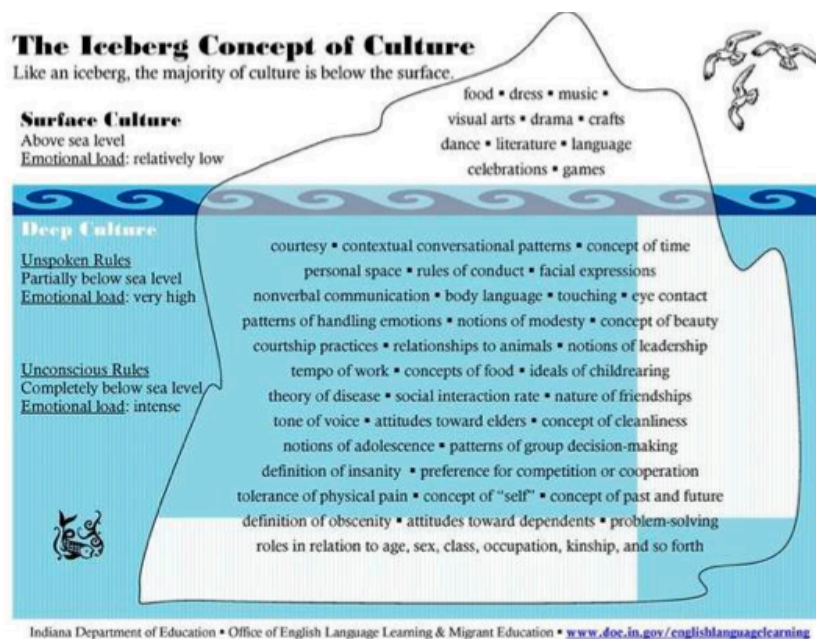


Figure 1: The Iceberg Concept of Culture (Indiana Department of Education)

As we examine culture within the social setting of schools, it is important to note that teachers often see the most obvious manifestations of culture. Teachers tend to miss its more fundamental expressions within the deep culture. A student's culture is like an iceberg and nine-tenths exists below the surface (Grant & Sleeter, 2007). Teachers must seek to understand all aspects of a student's culture in order to establish a sense of permanent value.

Adding to the complexity of culture, scholars question whether an individual subscribes to a single culture or multiple cultures. This highlights that *self* plays a significant role in culture. Current literature argues that individuals possess a range of multiple cultural identities and draw on a store of cultural repertoires relating to these

(Pearce, 2003). The ability to experience multiple cultures suggests the porous nature of culture in our global society (Diller & Moule, 2005). As a result, people perceive the world and each other in vastly different ways (Pinderhughes, 1989). In unpacking cultural competency, it is essential to heed this point when examining the role that culture plays in people's lives. Individuals typically identify with a range of social or cultural groups.

These can range from small, local, subcultures, through to larger, ethnic, political or gender-based cultures and collective national cultures to broader international cultures based on regionalism, ethnicity or religion, and ultimately to a unifying human culture (Heyward, 2004).

The cultural groups that an individual identifies with may overlap. The confluence of cultural identities describe that person's culture. For example, one may identify as a multi-ethnic person from Canada may share a cultural identity with Chilean, Caucasian, and Canadian groups. Although these are three distinct cultural groups, they only describe her cultural identity as related to ethnicity and nationality. This lends to the complexity of cross-cultural work.

Ultimately, it's necessary to examine how expatriates experience culture because international schools provide the context for the present study. Due to increased globalization, it is less likely that any one group will remain completely isolated or that all the individuals within that group will share the same beliefs and attitudes (Boutin-Foster et al., 2008). In the contemporary world, multiple cultural identities are becoming the norm and a Third Culture has emerged. Doctors John and Ruth Useem coined the term "Third Culture" following their studies of American expatriates and families in India in the 1950s. As they observed expatriates making sense of their cross cultural

experiences, the Useems “began to use the term ‘third culture’ as a generic term to cover the styles of life created, shared, and learned by persons who are in the process of relating their societies to each other” (Ruth Hill Useem, 1966). Expatriates negotiate their home culture and their host country’s culture with other expatriates that share this third culture. The Useems went on to describe the children of expatriates as “Third Culture Kids.” These children grow up in multicultural settings that afford a unique cultural perspective that is common to other transnational people.

Culture is complex. Given the all-encompassing nature of culture, it is best articulated as a paradigm. Moule (2012) describes a paradigm as “a set of shared assumptions and beliefs about how the world works, and it structures the perceptions and understanding of the scientists in a discipline.” Our paradigms tell us what is right and wrong, what is possible and impossible, and what rules apply. Moreover, they are ingrained into our worldview and structure how we reason and seek to understand our experiences. Arguably, culture is a human paradigm. It provides identity, beliefs, values and behavior. Because paradigms are an integral part of our morphology, people only change their paradigms with great difficulty. A shift in paradigms typically involves emotional turmoil, discomfort, and a sense of loss. As we look at the interaction of cultures, we can see how conflicts arise when a particular culture is imposed upon another. It also helps researchers to understand the inherent challenges that individuals face when developing their cultural competency.

Since culture is dynamic, effective cultural competency models must incorporate flexibility, the socially constructed attribute of culture, complexity of individual cultural identities and an emphasis of personal development. It is not enough to focus on the surface qualities of culture because the depth of a person's culture shapes their view of the world (Nuñez, 2000). Within the present study, culture is defined as paradigm that determines each individual's interpretation of the world.

Culture is viewed as a lens through which life is perceived. Through its differences (in language, values, personality and family patterns, worldview, sense of time and space, and rules of interaction), each culture generates a different experience of reality. The same situation may be experienced and interpreted very differently, depending on the cultural backgrounds of individuals. (Moule, 2012)

Historical Context of Cultural Competence

All systems within human ecology are directly or indirectly influenced by culture (Rogoff, 2003; Segall, 1990; Zoller Booth & Nieto, 2010). As we examine cultural competence within the helping professions, it is important to note that a culture-free delivery of service is nonexistent (Navarro, 1980). Throughout the past sixty years, scholars have paid close attention to the impact of discrimination on culturally different people. The foundations in cultural competence literature are rooted in the American experience, as the social and political context shifts from segregation to pluralism. In more recent years, cultural competence has caught the attention of international humanitarian, medical, business and education scholars because of changing global demographics.

Cultural competence is not a new concept and a variety of iterations have developed over the years. Within the literature, United States history plays a critical role in the development of the cultural competence field. James A. Banks (2004) asserts that the right of cultural groups to maintain important elements of their cultures and languages has been supported by philosophers and educators since the early 1900s. He provides examples of scholars and educators who stood against structures that demanded assimilation from recent immigration. In the first decades of the 1900s, Rachel Davis DuBois established ethnic heritage programs for European immigrants in schools. Later, Julius Drachsler (1920) and Horace M. Kallen (1924) argued for a cultural democracy. They argued that southern, central, and eastern European immigrants entering into the United States had a right to retain their cultures, languages, and fully participate within the political democracy.

The history of systemic oppression in the United States stems back to its colonization and the cultural destruction of native people during the establishment of a European protectorate. Issues of diversity have co-existed with the development of the nation. However, Lindsey, et al. (2003) suggest that the desegregation and the subsequent integration of racially different Americans in the 1950-60s sparked the beginnings of cultural competency movement. Desegregation raised questions about equal access and equal rights. Integration raised issues of assimilation and the myth of meritocracy. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 set in motion legal protection based on nondiscrimination of persons based on race, sex, color, national origin, disability, age, and religion (Lum,

2011). Human service providers such as social workers, medical professionals and educators were faced with the effect of dominant culture expectations and bias on the quality of service delivery. This propelled Americans into a decade of multiculturalism in the 1970s, where professionals in the public sector sought to find effective strategies to work with increasingly diverse populations (Lindsey, et al., 2003). Early terms for cultural competence work included, “intercultural communication” (Hoopes, 1972), “education of the culturally different” and “education for cultural pluralism” (Gibson, 1976).

Issues of desegregation, integration and assimilation were prominent in the United States but were not isolated there. “An assimilationist conception of [citizenship] existed in most of the Western democratic nation-states prior to the rise of the ethnic revitalization movements of the 1960s and 1970s” (Banks, 2004). The purpose of assimilation in countries colonized by Western nations was to create one mainstream culture that reflected the dominant, Eurocentric culture. It was assumed that ethnic groups should forsake their original culture in order to fully participate in a more modern culture (Paterson, 1977). The Civil Rights Movement in the United States started a wave of ethnic revitalization movements across the world. Ethnic groups in Canada, Britain, the Netherlands, and Australia expressed their feelings of marginalization and worked to ensure equitable structures within their nations (Banks, 2004). Like in the United States, this led to the development of multicultural education programs. This was, in part, a

response to the concerns of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups that felt marginalized in their nation-states (Banks & Banks, 2004).

In the 1980s, corporations realized the economic benefit of targeting various demographic sectors and business leaders insisted on diversity training for employees. Essentially, businesses seized the opportunity for monetary gains by developing distinctive marketing strategies. While diversity training propagated the business world, the development of cultural competence work also flourished in social work, counseling, and the medical profession. Scholars put forth work in “ethnic sensitivity practice” (Devore & Schlesinger, 1981), “ethnic competence” (Green, 1982), “ethnic minority practice” (Lum, 1986), and “cross cultural counseling” (Peterson, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 1989). The strong emphasis on diversity training led some to embrace the challenge of effectively interacting with culturally different people while it merely reinforced stereotypes for others. The 1990s marked a transformation in the movement because people began to view cultural competence as a moral imperative and vehicle for social justice.

Elaine Pinderhughes (1989) first introduced the term ‘cultural competence’ based on her studies in social work. She noted that the propulsion towards a pluralistic society led to profound changes in professions such as health, mental health, social services, and education. In response to these societal developments, Pinderhughes urged professionals to understand how their own cultural background provides meaning and significance for

their interactions with others. This idea highlighted a need to develop specific skills and attitudes, necessary to work effectively with clients across multiple cultural groups.

Examining current cultural competence literature reveals that most scholars attribute the foundation of their work to Terry L. Cross' monograph, *Towards a Culturally Competent System of Care* (1989). This seminal body of work emphasized the necessity for professionals to proactively bring cultural competency skills into their practice. It provided tools for professionals to address their responses to diversity in any setting and showed how both individuals and organizations can draw on cultural competence. Cross formulated six anchor points along a cultural competence continuum to effectively respond to cultural difference rather than addressing diversity from a static frame of reference (Lum, 2011).

Cultural competence work proliferated within the health and social work fields in the 1990s. This was due to a glaring discrepancy in the quality of care that people from different cultures were receiving. Socioeconomic factors were pivotal in this discrepancy of care. However, the medical profession also identified a significant disconnect between the primarily White, middle class, Western providers and the minority populations that they were serving. Out of this social milieu, Bennett (1993) established the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) as a means to address intercultural competence. This is a culture neutral model that explains how people experience cultural difference. The model introduces a continuum from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative perspective. Bennett's DMIS theory provides a basis on which training

can be designed to guide individuals into an ethnorelative stage. Once in an ethnorelative level, people view their own culture as equal among others.

The 1990s also saw a landmark development in the field of cultural competency, when the American Psychological Association adopted 31 multicultural counseling competencies. This was the first systemic move towards integrating cultural competences into a model for professional standards (Guzman & Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs, 1993). Doman Lum (2011) suggests that with the emergence of a cultural competence continuum, developmental model for intercultural sensitivity and standards for practice, the cultural competence movement began to grow in two related directions. The movement provided those in the helping professions with a culturally focused theme for their work. In addition, cultural competence provided a much needed education and training perspective. In order for professionals to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to work effectively with culturally diverse people, scholars created developmental cultural competence frameworks.

Cultural competence is the theme of a movement that can be carried in multiple directions as educators continue to apply the concept to the student populations within their schools (Lum, 2011). In the educational domain, cultural competency emerged after the multicultural, teaching for tolerance and antiracism movements (Lindsey et al., 2003). The cultural competence movement also parallels a focus on equitable distribution of human and capital resources, the role of power and oppression in education, and the belief that all children can learn and attain academic success with high quality instruction.

In reviewing the cultural competence literature, most of the educational work has developed in the last two decades. Throughout, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity remains popular among educational research. Whaley's (2008) descriptive and multivariate analyses revealed that in a search parameter there were 2, 520 hits for "cultural sensitivity" and 473 hits for "cultural competence." This makes sense, as the DMIS was established in the social sciences prior to frameworks such as the Cultural Proficiency Continuum. More recent literature states that intercultural sensitivity is an important attitudinal forerunner for developing cultural competencies. Therefore, the current trend in educational research moved towards a more comprehensive model of cultural competency. This is evidenced in Gay's (2000) model of "culturally responsive teaching," Patricia L. Marshall's (2002) "cultural diversity" work, and Lindsey's et al. (2003) model of "Cultural Proficiency."

Over the years, educational research has established that cultural competency plays a role in the classroom and seeks to further the understanding of this construct (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004; Pederson, 1998; Straffon, 2001; J. Westrick & Yuen, 2007; Westrick, 2004; Yuen, 2004). Much of this research involves a measurement of teacher and student intercultural sensitivity levels. Recently, a handful of studies have focused on the impact of teachers' cultural competency training and the influence cultural competency training has on student achievement (Gies, 2010; Holocker, 2010; Marks, 2011; Pauley, 2008; Wells-Rivers, 2011). Despite the significant growth in this field in the last two decades, there is a lack of focus regarding how the cultural competency

construct is operationalized into practice. This requires a thorough examination of the characteristics of cultural competence.

Attributes of Cultural Competence

Culture is not an exotic notion studied by a select group of anthropologists in the South Seas. It is a mold in which we are all cast, and it controls our daily lives in many unsuspected ways... [C]ulture hides much more than it reveals, and strangely enough what it hides, it hides most effectively from its own participants. (Hall, 1959)

Cultural competence is a large construct with knowledge, skill, behavioral and attitudinal aspects (Hill & Winter, 2007). Lum (2011) suggests that the best way to understand the construct is to examine the two subfactors: culture and competence. Culture was previously defined as the “lens through which life is perceived” (Moule, 2012). Competence means sufficiency, adequacy, and capability that may vary between individuals. Together, the construct *cultural competence* literally means that one is capable of adequate understanding and sufficient learning of shared meanings and behaviors in a social setting. Within the dynamic, external and internal learning patterns are constantly changing and the individual demonstrates flexibility in adapting to these changes (Lum, 2011).

In the early stages of diversity training and multicultural education models, professionals focused on acquiring a fixed set of cultural knowledge and removed the emotional aspect of the work. However, current literature points to a more holistic approach. Cultural competence work is both a deeply personal process and necessary to be effective professionally. Over the last two decades, cultural competence has expanded beyond a concept to a set of principles, knowledge theory, practice framework, and

professional standards. Jerry Diller and Jean Moule (2005) describe the development of cultural competency as the continual acquisition of knowledge, the development of new and more advanced skills, and ongoing reflective self-evaluation of progress. Cultural competency work is a lifelong journey that requires the courage to challenge personally held assumptions and learn culturally responsive skills. An individual must continually work towards cultural competence, knowing that it's a dynamic process that takes time. It is not an endeavor that can be met through an isolated workshop or pre-service course.

The philosophical underpinnings of cultural competence are found in a set of unifying principles. Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989) proposed a series of assumptions that culturally competent systems must subscribe to. The experiences of a diverse group of people form the basis of these assumptions and represent a departure from the typical dominant-culture models. Diller and Moule (2005) adapted the model from Cross, et al. to fit an educational setting.

A culturally competent system or individual accepts that culture is a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions such as education. Organizational settings that are built upon dominant culture values and structures may reinforce students' minority status. In doing so, they may lead students to develop issues related to self-esteem, identity formation, isolation and assumptions about the role of schooling. Besides participating in organizational settings such as schools, culturally diverse populations have natural support systems such as family units, communities, churches, and healers that they rely on when negotiating dominant culture realities. Therefore, a

culturally competent system respects the culturally defined needs of students and acknowledges that diverse groups are in conflict with dominant societal values. To best serve diverse populations of students, educators need to be in tune with the students' cultures and understand how marginalization affects their lives. In addition, they need to recognize that culturally diverse people may have different thought patterns, a preference for process over product and harmony over achievement. In a culturally competent system, these preferences are viewed as equally valid. It is also understood that culturally diverse people have to be bicultural to function in a dominant culture organization and this can raise psychological issues. While diverse groups are often in conflict with dominant society values, an ability to take the best from both worlds enhances the capacity of all.

Considering these assumptions, three overarching themes emerge. The first is that cultural difference is positive and something to be embraced. Second, organizations such as schools must show responsiveness to the cultural needs of its community members. Finally, service delivery should be provided in a manner that validates, facilitates, liberates and empowers culturally diverse people by cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities and professional or academic success (Gay, 2010).

Cross et al. (1989) also point to five individual skill areas that are necessary in the development of cultural competence. These build upon the underlying assumptions and highlight a starting point for people to work on their cultural competency. The skill areas

are: (1) self-awareness, (2) awareness and acceptance of differences, (3) managing dynamics of difference, (4) knowledge of client's culture, and (5) adaptation of skills.

Cultural competence workshops often refer to the self-awareness skill as 'inside-out' work. Culture is an integral aspect of all that we do and people rarely take the time to examine how their cultural background influences their own behavior. A first step in cultural competence work involves gaining sufficient self-knowledge so that one can anticipate their own cultural limits and foresee potential areas of conflict (Moule, 2012). In a study of international humanitarian workers, Wei-Wen Chang (2007) defines cultural competence work as a process that involves both "internal discovery and external adjustment." The aptitude for self-awareness is a precursor to understanding how to learn from one another across cultural boundaries. Recognizing and moving beyond our own deeply rooted assumptions is crucial because it means we are willing to try on someone else's perspective and accept that it is just as valid as our own (Noble, 1999).

Following the development of self-awareness, individuals begin to recognize and accept how cultures differ and that cultural lenses affect the learning process. In the United States, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines cultural competence as a set of academic and interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. The literature further highlights the ability to discern the relevant cultural differences as a fundamental concept associated with intercultural sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). It is important to

note that an essential component of this skill set is accepting differences (Diller & Moule, 2005). This means that when working towards an overarching goal, an individual's approach may vary significantly based on their cultural background, values, styles of communication, perception of time, etc. The differences in approach must be accepted as valid. Following the dynamic nature of culture, culturally competent skill sets are constantly evolving and changing with cultural groups.

Related to self-awareness and developing an acceptance of differences, individuals must establish the third skill set, that of managing cultural differences. Inherent in the journey towards cultural competence is the potential for miscommunication. Therefore, individuals need to learn the most respectful manner to negotiate miscommunication. Knowing oneself helps to pinpoint where miscommunication may happen but in truth, a misunderstanding may happen at any time. As individuals develop the ability to manage cultural differences, Xin Liang and Gang Zhang (2009) acknowledge that a commitment to social justice and equity allows people to actively challenge the status quo. A personal resolution to work towards cultural competence means that the individual is also willing to transform belief systems into action. Scholars caution that merely increasing exposure to cultural difference does not by itself guarantee the development of intercultural sensitivity or cultural competence (Bennett, 1993; Westrick, 2004). Rather, limiting one's skills to the recognition of differences may reinforce preexisting stereotypes.

Cross et al. (1989) specifically advocate for practitioners to familiarize themselves with their client's culture. Admittedly, cultures do not exist in a vacuum and cultural competence cannot be taught as a set of immutable concrete facts (Boutin-Foster et al., 2008). However, having a cultural context for your interactions aids in avoiding misunderstandings and proactively setting up experiences for success. For example, when an influx of Southeast Asian immigrants arrived in the United States, Children's Protective Services received a significant number of abuse reports from schools. Upon investigation, the schools realized that the marks on these children were from a homeopathic remedy called *cupping* rather than physical abuse (Diller & Moule, 2005). Since it is unreasonable to expect culturally competent individuals to know everything about the culturally different people around them, the reality is that we should strive to understand the cultural context of the people with whom we work and live. This may help individuals realize when they do not have a cultural context and when to use their cultural competence skills to learn more.

The fifth skill set involves adapting one's behavior in order to accommodate for cultural differences. This is highly dependent on the particular culture of the clients involved, whether students or parents. It requires that a practitioner is well versed in using multiple cultural lenses (Nuñez, 2000) and behaves in a manner that treats both cultures as equal. Lisa Delpit (2006) offers an example in which African American children may not believe their teacher cares about them unless they act in a highly

authoritative manner. While that may not reflect the teacher's cultural upbringing, the teacher needs to adapt in order to meet the students' needs.

Cultural competence requires the development of skills to effectively interact with people who are culturally different. Yet, cultural competence is more than a discrete skill set. Culture exists as a paradigm which we use to make sense of the world. As such, people are emotionally attached to their paradigms and only give them up or change them with great difficulty and discomfort (Diller & Moule, 2005). Therefore, cultural competency also requires a cognitive shift in an individual's frame of reference from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism (Bennett, 1993). Ethnocentric thinking is characterized by holding one's own cultural reference apart from others. An ethnocentric perspective assesses culturally different behavior as either good or bad, depending on the similarities to an individual's own culture. On the other hand, ethnorelative thinking occurs in context with other cultures and no one culture is held to a higher standard. An ethnorelative perspective asserts that cultural difference is neither good nor bad, it's just different (Bennett, 1993).

Since the cultural competence framework emerged out of the United States and many of the scholars have a Western cultural background, Ming-Jung Ho and colleagues (2008) chose to examine the relevance of this framework in a non-Western context. They investigated the development of medical students' cultural competency skills in Taiwan. Their results suggest that a "cultural competence curriculum with a conceptual framework combining non-stereotypic knowledge, reflective attitude, and practical skills

could be effective in non-Western cultural settings” (Ho, et al., 2008). This preliminary study, along with the diverse composition of scholars in the forefront of cultural competency research lends to the legitimacy of this framework.

Models of Cultural Competency

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.

Milton Bennett’s (1986; 1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) provides a theoretical framework to explain the progression of an individual’s worldview towards intercultural competence. Bennett used a grounded theory approach, where he applied cybernetic constructivism and observations of intercultural adaptation (Hammer et al., 2003). Through his work, Bennett confirmed that people undergo six stages as their cultural worldview advances and incorporates more complex ways of understanding cultural difference. As illustrated in Figure 2, this involves a cognitive shift from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative orientation.

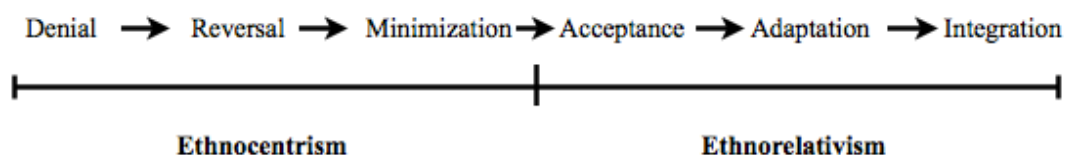


Figure 2: Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 1993)

The three ethnocentric stages (Denial, Defense, Minimization) describe a range of cultural avoidance behaviors. In comparison, the three ethnorelative stages (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration) describe a range of culture seeking behaviors. It is important to

note that the DMIS model shows a fundamental change in worldview rather than descriptors of changed behavior. Self-reports and observable behavior are methods to demonstrate the underlying cultural worldview of the individual.

The first ethnocentric stage, Denial of difference, characterizes a worldview where other cultures are irrelevant. A person in the Denial stage believes that the very existence of other cultures has no affect on their own life. Typically, those in the denial stage were raised in homogeneous communities where there was little or no contact with culturally different people. When they come across someone of a different culture, their response is one of indifference or vaguely referring to them as the ‘other’. Two substages are isolation and separation. While isolation is unintentional seclusion from culturally different people, separation is an intentional act with the purpose of remaining isolated.

The second ethnocentric stage, Defense against difference, encompasses both recognition of and negative response to cultural difference. People in the Defense stage perceive cultural difference as a threat towards their own cultural worldview. Their behavior is polarizing and they use a “we-they” phraseology (Hammer et al., 2003). There are three Defense substages: Superiority, Denigration, and Reversal. The Superiority orientation follows an inflated positive view of one’s own cultural group and any criticism causes them to demote the other group to a lower status. Those in the Denigration substage evaluate other cultures in an adverse light and reinforce negative stereotypes. They may also use Denigration as a rationale for committing violent acts against culturally different people. Those in Reversal are in a position of internal conflict

because they view another culture as superior to their own and purposefully alienate themselves from their own culture. This is coined as “going native” or “going local” and is a phenomenon that some multinational companies use as a rationale for frequently moving expatriate employees.

The third ethnocentric stage, Minimization of difference, describes a person who recognizes cultural differences but subscribes to the idea that all people are essentially the same. They justify that others resemble what they know about themselves through a focus on universal similarities. The two substages of Minimization are Physical and Transcendent universalism. Physical universalism emphasizes the physiological similarities between people such as biological traits and common needs as a species. Transcendent universalism stresses that people are similar in spiritual, economic, political, philosophical and other overarching commonalities. Those in the Minimization stage may correct people who highlight cultural differences. Often, this is at the expense of other cultures that are trivialized or romanticized. People in Minimization are often in the dominant culture and fail to recognize institutional privilege that they are afforded because of their cultural status.

The three stages of ethnorelativism signify a change in cultural worldview, where people function within the context of cultural difference. Cultural difference is not relegated to a positive or negative but simply expresses that there is a difference. This does not mean that those with an ethnorelative worldview agree with all cultures.

However, even if they disagree with an aspect of another culture, they do accept the validity of that culture.

Acceptance of difference is the first ethnorelative stage. People in Acceptance recognize cultural difference and show an appreciation of those differences. The most significant shift from the ethnocentric stages is that someone in Acceptance believes that all cultures are inherently equal. They view culture as a means for organizing human behavior and understand that different ways of accomplishing this exist. There are two substages of Acceptance: Behavioral Relativism and Value Relativism. Those in Behavioral Relativism accept that behavior varies across cultures and are valid for those who share them. However, that does not mean that they are necessarily comfortable with all behaviors. Those in Value Relativism accept that values and beliefs vary across cultural groups. The notion of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ differ between cultural groups but are valid for those that understand them (Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003).

The second ethnorelative stage, Adaptation to difference, characterizes people who purposefully shift their perspective depending on cultural context. By using alternative perspectives and approaching decision making from multiple viewpoints, these individuals are better able to communicate effectively with people from different cultures. There are two substages of Adaptation: Behavioral Adaptation and Cognitive Adaptation. Behavioral Adaptation involves internalizing more than one cultural worldview and is described as pluralism. Cognitive Adaptation involves the ability to

shift perspectives and understand the emotions underlying a particular perspective.

People who realize these stages can appropriately express feelings in a cultural context.

Empathy is a component of Cognitive Adaptation. Adaptation is the basis of bicultural or multicultural orientations.

Interestingly, the third ethnorelative stage, Integration of difference, is not necessarily more effective when interacting with culturally different people. Integration depicts an individual who no longer subscribes to any particular culture. Rather, they have integrated one or more worldviews into their own. An important feature of this stage is cultural marginalism because they are on the outskirts of cultural groups and serve as facilitators of cultural transition (Paige et al., 2003). There are two substages of Integration: Contextual Evaluation and Constructive Marginality. In Contextual Evaluation, a person uses different cultural frames of reference to evaluate a situation. A Constructive Marginal participant participates in a 'marginal reference group' and facilitates constructive contact between cultures. Those in Integration may experience intercultural competence as an alienating process or they may be empowered by their ability to move fluidly between cultural groups. Integration may describe the worldview of long-term expatriates, global nomads and Third Culture Kids (Hammer et al., 2003).

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Within the last decade, the Cultural Proficiency framework has gained momentum within education. This approach follows a learning-and-effectiveness paradigm because it concretely connects diversity to strategies used in the workplace. Previous educational

diversity initiatives followed either a discrimination-and-fairness paradigm or an access-and-legitimacy paradigm that emphasized inequity in an abstract manner (Thomas & Ely, 1996). Lindsey, Robins and Terrell's (1999) Cultural Proficiency framework is a culmination of Cross' et al. (1989) influential cultural competency work and Bennett's (1993) DMIS. The framework goes beyond a cultural competency continuum to ground the model in a set of beliefs about diversity and nonnegotiable behaviors. By introducing the idea of cultural *proficiency*, they suggest that gaining cultural competence is not the final goal. Rather, professionals who develop cultural competence must also effectively respond to cultural difference. The model is derived from additive acculturation, with the goal of effectively working in a pluralistic society. The emphasis is on embracing diversity and responding to it in ways that acknowledge and esteem cultural differences while simultaneously valuing and supporting similarities (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2007; Ogbu, 2003). Moreover, the model provides the tools to work towards cultural proficiency as well as benchmarks to assess an individual's or organization's development. The Cultural Proficiency framework includes a set of four interrelated cultural proficiency tools: Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Proficiency Continuum, Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency and Barriers to Cultural Proficiency.

The Cultural Proficiency model is based on several Guiding Principles that serve as the underlying values (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell, 1999). Similar to the basic assumptions outlined in Cross' (1989) model of a culturally competent system, these

principles provide a moral framework for cultural competency (Lindsey, Nuri Robins, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2009).

First is the belief that culture is a predominant force that shapes people's values and behaviors. "Culturally proficient educators recognize that what they experience as normal or regular is part of their culture" (Lindsey et al., 1999). Since culture is ever present in our professional and personal lives, the second principle emphasizes that people are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture. Despite popular belief, there's no such thing as common knowledge. Your cultural worldview affects your cultural expectations and the lens with which you experience the world. The dominant culture sets the criteria for behavior. Therefore, members of the dominant culture inherently understand the 'unwritten rules'. On the other hand, culturally different people must learn those rules and negotiate how to interact within a different culture.

The third principle asserts the necessity of acknowledging both the group and personal identities of individuals. It is demeaning to both disregard a person's group identity and to stereotype an individual into a group so that their individuality is overlooked. It follows that the fourth principle acknowledges that diversity within cultures is important. Cultural groups are neither homogeneous nor monolithic. Finally, we must respect the unique needs that members of cultural groups may have. The 'one-size-fits-all' model of education does not work. Whether people are members of a dominant or non-dominant culture, they have different cultural needs. To be effective in

our culturally diverse society, professionals must learn how to embrace cultural differences and adjust their practice accordingly.

Using the Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency, Lindsey and colleagues (1999) propose that the journey towards cultural proficiency can be represented as a continuum. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum is a developmental model and is dependent on situation, time and other variables. Figure 3 shows six points along the continuum that indicate unique ways of seeing and responding to difference: cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency. Similar to Bennett's DMIS, as an individual increases their cultural competence they move from a monocultural to a pluralistic worldview.

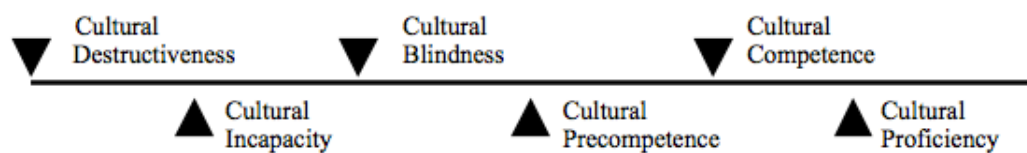


Figure 3: Cultural Proficiency Continuum (Lindsey, et al., 2009)

The first stage on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum, Cultural Destructiveness, is the easiest to detect because it represents attitudes and behavior that are destructive to culturally different people. We see extreme examples of Cultural Destructiveness through the course of human history. Ethnic cleansings and genocides in Europe and Africa stand out as illustrations of this negative stage on the continuum. However, Cultural

Destructiveness also played a prominent role in the American efforts to reclaim Native American children's culture through the Bureau of Indian Affairs' educational programs. During this time in U.S. history, young Native American children were taken from their homes, housed in boarding facilities and forced to learn dominant culture norms to eliminate their own cultural knowledge.

The next stage on the continuum, Cultural Incapacity, portrays attitudes and behaviors that support the superiority of the dominant culture. The use of slurs, discrimination, and extreme bias reinforce the inferiority of non-dominant groups. Ignorance and irrational fear of others are characteristics of this stage. Historically, the Jim Crow laws in the United States purposefully denied African Americans basic rights in an outright effort to systemically oppress a culturally different group. A subtler example of Cultural Incapacity is tokenism. This occurs when one member of a non-dominant group is put in a highly visible position to prove an organization's inclusive hiring practices. Yet those organizations typically demonstrate discriminatory hiring practices based on stereotypes. The tokenism of placing a culturally different person in a visible position serves to reinforce a stereotype (Lindsey et al., 1999). Besides discriminatory behavior, Cultural Incapacity leads to learned helplessness. In this case, non-dominant people experience disempowerment.

Cultural Blindness is commonly misinterpreted as inclusive because individuals in this stage believe that all people are universally the same. Traditionally, Color Blindness was the goal of diversity training programs and many teachers find themselves

in this stage. They proudly proclaim that they don't see differences in people and hold this as proof of their inclusivity. Unfortunately, they're unable to acknowledge that their attitudes and behaviors are a privilege afforded to those in the dominant culture. This serves to perpetuate systemic oppression.

An attitude of Cultural Blindness stems from several sources in education (Gay, 2010). Educators in the Cultural Blindness stage believe that education has nothing to do with cultures and heritages. It is about teaching intellectual, vocational and civic skills. Moreover, most educators want to do the best for all their students. Those in the Color Blindness stage mistakenly believe that treating students differently because of their cultural orientation is discriminatory. They are unaware of how their inability to accept unique cultural attributes demeans culturally different people. In the classroom, culturally different thinking and behaviors are viewed as disobedient or a sign of inadequacy. In addition, the Culturally Blind educator believes that good teaching is transcendent and is identical for all students, settings, and circumstances. In other words, *best practice* is applicable in all cultural contexts because it denotes mastery teaching.

Cultural Precompetence signifies an awareness of cultural differences. This is a significant shift and reflects a move into an ethnorelative perspective. However, people in Precompetence are also aware of their limitations in interacting effectively with culturally different people. They recognize when a non-dominant group is experiencing oppression but they feel unable to bring about positive change. Those in the Precompetence stage often experience guilt and a sense of inadequacy.

Cultural Competence represents the fifth stage on the Cultural Proficiency Continuum. Individuals in this stage recognize and accept cultural differences. They are able to manage the dynamics of cultural difference and are continuously working to increase their ability to work with culturally different people. Culturally competent individuals are inclusive both in their professional and personal lives. They seek to align their values with organizational structures. At this point, culturally competent individuals are able to fully address the needs of diverse environments (Lindsey et al., 1999).

Cultural Proficiency characterizes the final stage of the continuum. People in this stage have moved beyond working effectively with culturally different people and embody a professional who knows exactly how to learn about culture (Lindsey et al., 1999). Culturally proficient individuals have acute self-awareness and recognize how their behavior may be construed as offensive to others. They're constantly seeking new knowledge and improving upon their practice. They know how to negotiate cultural differences in an unknown setting without offending and they are readily able to access resources to be successful in new situations. Above all else, they advocate for culturally proficient practices in all areas of their professional and personal lives. Culturally proficient educators hold a vision for an equitable and socially just democracy and have the skills to promote positive change (Lindsey et al., 2009).

Another important aspect of the Cultural Proficiency toolkit is the Essential Elements for Cultural Proficiency. Lindsey and colleagues (1999) outlined these essential elements as standards for individual behaviors and organizational practices. The Essential

Elements provide educators with a set of expectations to measure their alignment. Assessing Cultural Knowledge refers to your ability to name cultural differences and the affect that cultures have on one another. Valuing Diversity depicts the ability to recognize, accept and celebrate cultural differences in an affirming manner. Managing the Dynamics of Difference describes the ability to effectively resolve conflicts caused by cultural differences in a way that honors each culture and promotes trust building behaviors. Adapting to Diversity promotes changing institutional or systemic behaviors to align practices with cultural competence. It involves the use of intercultural communication and proactively reducing conflicts caused by cultural difference. Finally, Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge requires that cultural knowledge is integrated into the organizational structure. It is evidenced by culturally competent policies and practices, as well as ongoing cultural competency professional development.

A culturally proficient classroom has an inside-out systemic approach that satisfies the needs of everyone in the school community. In doing so, democratic practices that seek out multiple voices so that the dissonance serves as an impetus for positive change. Individuals within a culturally proficient school function collaboratively within the diverse school community. Moreover, cultural proficiency is operationalized into daily activity in a culturally proficient school. Cultural knowledge is integrated into the school, in ways that lead to visible changes in policy. For example, a culturally proficient school will have more than one gender-neutral bathroom. When performing an environmental scan in the school, you will see culturally responsive signs, student work,

pictures, artwork, and the physical plan of the school is fully accessible. A culturally proficient school does not have barriers due to language, sexual orientation, disability, etc. In addition, the hiring practices of the school reflect the recruitment, hiring and promotion of people who think and act differently from those who are already in the school. This includes the recruitment of quality teachers who are from backgrounds that reflect the diversity of the student population. In essence, the school environment is welcoming and accessible to people from diverse backgrounds.

The culturally proficient educator embraces continuous improvement and uses triple loop learning, where reflective practices are used to continually address assumptions and uncover new ways of being (Argyris, 1990; Hargrove, 1995). The educator understands change and is able to operate in a culture of change that allows them to persevere on the edge of rapid and continuous transformation. Yet they develop a hyper-focused environment that maintains high expectations for all students to attain high levels of academic achievement. In addition, the classroom is oriented towards instructional interventions to prevent learning gaps. Students experience differentiated instruction, multiple assessments, progress monitoring, are active participants in their education, and are provided the resources necessary to ensure their success. Furthermore, the culturally proficient educator disaggregates achievement data based on formative assessments to plan, monitor, and adjust instruction so that students are mastering essential learning.

In addition, the scope of a culturally proficient educator does not end at the school doors. Culturally proficient educators use students, their families, languages, races and ethnicities, and neighborhoods as resources to enhance the classroom. By using the diversity of the school community, the teacher can provide resources to ensure that high expectations and the attainment of rigorous standards are achieved by all the students. The families within a culturally proficient classroom feel that they are part of the school community and know that their experiences and culture enrich the class. There is a sense of respect and appreciation for what each family brings to the class.

Although the complexity of cultural proficiency causes educators to move up and down on the continuum, one thing is clear. Educators work to move up the cultural proficiency continuum and actively reach for elements of cultural proficiency. It is vital for the educator to reflect on their current level, why they're at that level and the next steps to become more culturally proficient. Beyond the concrete indicators, you can feel a difference in the class when you walk into a culturally proficient educator's room. The energy of the class is positive and welcoming. There is a sense of trust, respect, and community among the students.

Lindsey and colleagues (2007) also propose that organizations have cultural proficiency indicators that measure a school's performance. These indicators can be seen in the system wide approach to equity issues, how cultural proficiency is operationalized, through approaches to instruction and assessment, professional development, the inclusion of families and the community, and how voices are heard in the school.

Cross-Cultural Efficacy and the Meta-Cultural Competency Model

The most recent cultural competence framework, Cross-Cultural Efficacy, has gained traction in the medical field within the last five years. The development of Cross-Cultural Efficacy follows the work of Bennett's DMIS and Lindsey's Cultural Proficiency Continuum. Similar to the Cultural Proficiency model, the Cross-Cultural Efficacy framework was developed as way for professionals to deepen their understanding of cultural competency. Ana E. Nuñez (2000) notes that in practice, cultural competence is still treated as a set of discrete facts and skills. The nuances involved and the depth of skill has largely been overlooked within the professional domain. With that said, it's important to recognize that the Cross-Cultural Efficacy framework reiterates much of Lindsey's Cultural Proficiency model. If the Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency, Cultural Proficiency Continuum, Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency and Barriers to Cultural Proficiency are used in concert, then practitioners will be able to accomplish the goals set forth by the Cross-Cultural Efficacy model.

Cross-Cultural Efficacy is built on the premise that cultural competence goes beyond the mere ability to respond effectively with culturally different people. Cross-Cultural Efficacy implies that a practitioner is culturally competent, conscientious and responsive to the consumer's cultural interpretation of the services provided, expected and needed (Kelly, 2008; Nunez, 2000; Toporek & Reza, 2001). It also extends to the organizational context of behaviors. Cross-Cultural Efficacy highlights culturally

integrated attitudes, policies, and behaviors that affirm, inform, and validate consumers (Fuller, 2002; Hendricks, 2003; Mallow & Cameron-Kelly, 2006; Nunez, 2000). This framework also requires researchers to study cultural competency from the consumer's perspective. It asserts that the practitioner must be effective in their interactions with culturally different people and that neither the practitioner's or client's culture is preferred as the accurate view (Nunez, 2000).

Alissa Mallow and Diann Cameron-Kelly (2006) propose that professionals must deepen their understanding of culture and use a comprehensive practice of cultural competence. Therefore, they refer to Meta-Cultural Competency as a more rigorous process of cultural competence development. Meta-cultural competency embodies: 1) traditional cultural competency, 2) cross-cultural education, and 3) cross-cultural efficacy in the dyad of practitioner-client (Anderson, Scrimshaw, Fullilove, Fielding & Normand, 2003; Champaneria & Axtell, 2005; Nuñez, 2000; Walker & Staton, 2000). This is similar to the guidance that Lindsey and colleagues (2003) provide in their school leadership manual, with the goal of developing culturally competent schools. It involves personal development, professional development, culturally responsive interactions among individuals, and organizational change. The Meta-Cultural Competency model presented in Figure 4 describes a paradigm for effective cross-cultural interactions and to promote high quality service in culturally diverse settings.

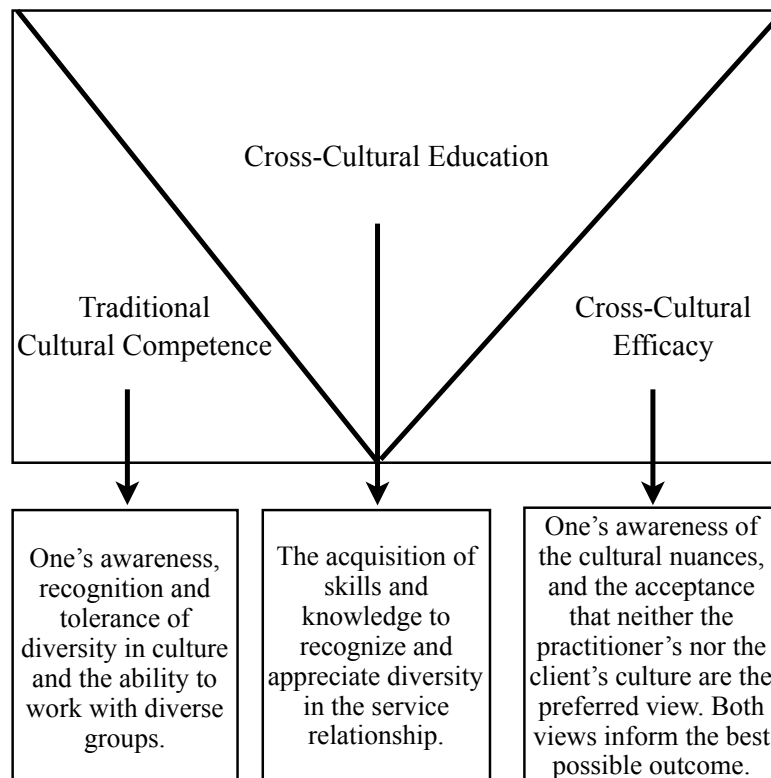


Figure 4: Paradigm for Meta-Cultural Competence (Mallow & Cameron-Kelly, 2006)

This model takes into account the vast complexities of culture and moves the professional past their natural tendency to focus on ethnicity and race. Rather, Meta-Cultural Competency assumes that the professional also considers cultural diversity in religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, family migration, acculturation, and other informal and formal affiliations. This model requires professionals to be versed in the cultural nuances that clients bring to their interactions (Mallow & Cameron-Kelly, 2006).

There is an acknowledgment that cultural competence is not a natural process and professionals must consciously work towards ethnorelative perspectives and behaviors.

Culture and culture competence take into account innumerable variances with each individual. This is compounded by the intersection of a professional's cultural background, the client's cultural background, an organization's culture and the sociopolitical context that surrounds all three.

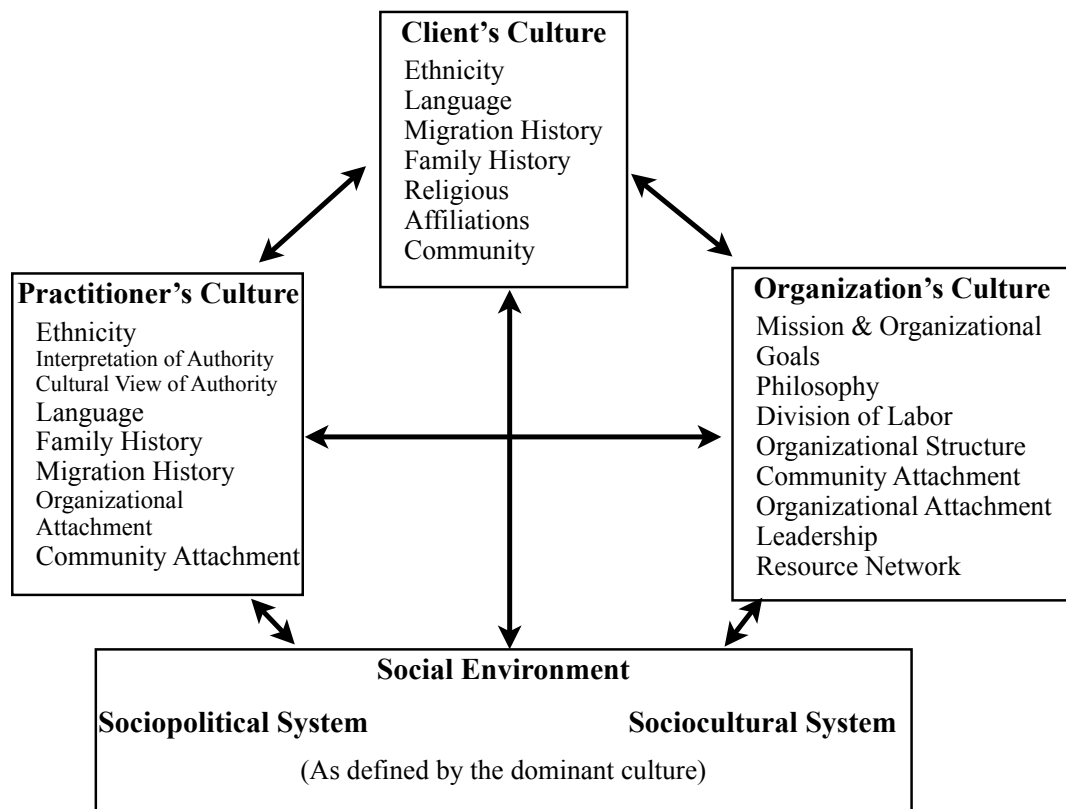


Figure 5: Intersections of Meta-Cultural Competence

Figure 5 shows how these elements intersect and demonstrates the complexity of cultural competence. It is not enough to gain cultural knowledge or even to accept that all cultures are equally valid. The requisite skill in Cross-Cultural Efficacy is to effectively work with culturally different people, where the practitioner's own cultural background, the organizational culture and the surrounding dominant culture's influence are all

considered. When we consider the complex nature of our interactions with students, we can begin to understand why such a comprehensive perspective on cultural competence is necessary.

Cultural Competency in the Medical Field

Over the last several decades, cultural competence has received a great deal of attention in healthcare because of an increasingly diverse patient population. This led to significant disparities in health care based on ethnic and racial differences, immigration status, and poverty (Betancourt, 2003). Much of the research on cultural competence training and the effect of cultural competence of the health care provider originated in the health care system. Scholars suggest that improving the cultural competency of physicians is one of the most important strategies to help mitigate health care disparities and is a priority for both graduate and undergraduate medical education (Institute of Medicine, 2002; Liaison Committee of Medical Education, 2007; Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Outcome Project, 2009). Thus far, the studies show that cultural competence training is effective in increasing positive interactions with patients. However, the minimalist nature of most training programs within and outside of the medical schools has not led to significant change. Addressing the disparities continues to be a challenge and researchers suggest that cultural competency must be addressed in both the taught and hidden curricula of medical schools (Thompson et al., 2010).

Cultural Competency in Education

Over the last twenty years, cultural competency work has flourished within the medical, social service, and law enforcement fields with accompanying research on the implementation and outcomes. Education based cultural competence literature has gained traction only recently. It's a relatively new area of research for educational researchers with the bulk of studies emerging in the last ten years. To date, the research on the effectiveness of teacher cultural competence training is inconclusive and provides limited discussions on how cultural competence training impacts student success.

Allison N. Marks' (2011) qualitative study on what teachers know and perceive about cultural competence revealed that teachers do not necessarily bring culturally relevant practices into the classroom without prior training. The study also highlighted that pre-service multicultural training may have little influence on a teacher's cultural competency in the classroom. Marks also revealed that when cultural competence isn't a priority within the school, teachers might have an informal understanding of the characteristics of cultural competence. Furthermore, the degree to which they recognize the importance of cultural competency wavers according to personal experience. She noted that the teachers lack confidence and efficacy around cultural competence. The teachers interviewed in Marks' study indicated that without a formalized training program and system of evaluation, teachers' approach to cultural competency was individualized and based primarily on gut instinct and personal experience.

In recent years, studies on cultural competence training show that a strong professional development program can profoundly affect teachers' perspectives both within and outside of school (Gies, 2010). On the other hand, a heavily mandated but ineffective program can have an adverse impact on teachers' view of cultural competence work (Pauley, 2008). Developing cultural competency along a continuum is a deeply personal journey that requires a trusting environment, courageous conversations with a diverse group of educators, self-reflection and a commitment to openly examining one's past actions (Gies, 2010). Without these crucial elements, a lack of teacher agency and entrenched power structures serve as powerful barriers to developing cultural competence.

In addition, there is a shortage of research that examines the ramifications of cultural competence training on student success. Initial studies suggest that cultural relevant instructional training may have a positive outcome on reading achievement. In Wells-Rivers (2011) study, students from the non-dominant culture did show steady growth as their teachers developed greater skills in culturally relevant instruction. However, this growth was not limited to the marginalized students. It appears that students from both dominant and non-dominant cultures demonstrated progress as a result of their teachers' training. In this case, the achievement gap persists with little evidence that the cultural competence training would aid in reducing the academic disparities. This is not to say the training wasn't beneficial. Simply that it didn't achieve the purpose of reducing disparities in academic achievement. Anecdotally, discipline

referrals declined, teachers reported an increased capacity, and the number of learning focused Student Assistance Team meetings grew as teachers moved through a culturally relevant practice training program (Wells-Rivers, 2011).

Criticisms and Challenges in Cultural Competence

Many articles on cultural competence appear to take an essentialist view of culture in which it becomes a list of characteristics to be memorized rather than a dynamic process of complex interactions (Gray & Thomas, 2002). This lends to a focus on ‘otherness’ and places blame on the clients, while assuming the provider is a culturally neutral individual (Kuma-Tan, Beagan, Loppie, MacLeod, & Frank, 2007; Seeleman, Suurmond, & Stronks, 2009). Scholars are concerned that this may reinforce stereotypes and perpetuate a system of oppression (Boutin-Foster, et al., 2008; Nuñez, 2000). Those who misunderstand cultural competence may also incorrectly interchange ethnicity and culture. In doing so, those individuals are likely to ignore the diversity within cultural groups and assume that everyone who looks the same, will also behave the same way in similar circumstances (Hill & Winter, 2007).

Ruth G. Dean (2001) suggests that the term, ‘cultural competence’ incorrectly assumes that there is an end-point in the process. Rather, she proposes a model in which “maintaining an awareness of one’s lack of competence is the goal rather than the establishment of competence” (Dean, 2001). For example, the client is the *expert* and the clinician is in the position of seeking knowledge. In Dean’s model, there is no consideration of competence as a discrete characteristic. This is because the process

involves gaining understandings (always partial) of a phenomenon that is evolving and changing (Dean, 2001). Therefore, an individual who progresses along the continuum should increasingly understand their *lack of competence*. Fundamentally, her reverse model indicates that it is theoretically impossible to reach cultural competence.

Doman Lum (2011) suggests that the greatest criticism stems from a lack of focus and agreement about the common definition of cultural competence. This is clouding the theory conceptualization of the practice approach. Skeptics wonder if cultural competency is merely a vehicle for practitioners who are interested in social justice and diversity work to push their ideologies. In order to gain recognition as a social science, scholars and researchers must pull together the work into a cohesive structure with sound research.

The tremendous growth in this field of study has led to the expansion of its scope, influence and size. Yet, cultural competence is involved in an ideological struggle involving the methodology and operationalization of the conceptual meaning of the term, research issues concerning measurement outcomes and instrumentation and theory of knowledge (Lum, 2011). This is why it is essential to relate back to the central meaning of the construct, the assumptions, and core principles. With those elements in mind, the cultural competence framework can be operationalized.

Characteristics of International Schools

As the world becomes an increasingly global community, the international school model comes to the forefront of education. The importance of international schools can

be seen in the exponential growth of these organizations around the world. The emergence of international schools is primarily a post World War II phenomenon (Leach, 1969). This can be attributed to the United States' heightened interest in developing a presence across the globe. They sought to achieve this through newly created embassies and growing multinational corporations. The Office of Overseas Schools within the U.S. Department of State assisted 130 international schools in 1969. Of those schools, only one American International School existed before 1900 (American School of Mexico City), two were created during the early 1900s, and six more were born in the two decades preceding World War II. Of the remaining schools, twenty-two came into existence during the war and the remaining ninety-nine were established between 1950 and 1969 (Luebke & Gaw, 2000). Mary C. Hayden and Jeff J. Thompson (1995) found that the small group of international schools identified in the 1960s has grown to over 1,000 schools worldwide.

Many of these international schools developed in response to the rise in multinational companies, in an increasingly interconnected and growing global economy. Multinational companies intentionally employ professionals who expect to live in a variety of global locations during their careers (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). In turn, those professionals seek out international schools for their children's K12 education. Thus, the growth of international schools has paralleled the expansion of multinational corporations. Despite the emergence of hundreds of international schools since the 1960s,

surprisingly little research is set in the context of international schools. In fact, the bulk of research in international school education has occurred within the last ten to twenty years.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the cultural competence of international school teachers and determine if an association exists with student engagement.

International schools serve as a microcosm of the wider educational context. With hugely diverse student populations, researchers are able to access a multitude of student nationalities from which to analyze research data. International education studies provide a baseline of knowledge for internationalism, intercultural relations, perceptions of what being international means, the Third Culture, culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural literacy and cultural competency.

The term *international school* is used loosely because most overseas schools developed out of a unique local expatriate need. The schools are as varied as the parents, administrators and teachers who banded together to form each school. Although there are commonalities, there are also distinct differences because of the stakeholders in each school community. Therefore, international school scholars have sought to define what an international school is and outline the characteristics different types of international schools. This requires an examination of the historical context, the school's founders, the curriculum, the mission, and the student population that the school serves.

The work has been challenging because the written literature about international schools is scant. Bob Sylvester (2002) investigated the written history of these schools as

far back as the 1950s and 1960s with little success. International schools are transient by nature and recorded histories come and go with employees, parents and board members. As schools move locations within a city, undergo redesigns and are renovated, little is archived. Rather, these schools live in the moment and maintain an oral rather than written tradition. Stories are shared around the world and passed from generation to generation. International educators develop their common understanding of what international schools are based on lived experiences and the stories. However, this makes it difficult to develop a concrete definition for the term *international school*.

International school professionals and researchers are engaged in a debate over what characterizes these unique school systems. The debate considers the following aspects: curriculum, geographic location, student demographics, governing bodies, and the sources of funding. Based on these attributes, Robert Leach (1969) developed four major classifications for international schools. His classification system is based on the general assumption that an international school serves students from several nationalities.

Leach (1969) asserts that the following categories distinguish international schools from one another. The first type of international school possesses an international minded curriculum with a student body composed of one nationality. Examples are international curriculum magnet schools in the United States. The second type is a proprietary overseas schools with a headmaster. These are owned by a private corporation, single individuals or a partnership group. Proprietary schools are for-profit

and parents are purchasing a service through a corporate provider. The third category includes national schools serving an expatriate community. These are foundation, embassy and military schools. The last type of school that Leach distinguishes is a binational school formed by two or more governments.

A number of years later, several international school researchers expanded on Leach's original classification. International school researchers like Matthews (1989) and Sanderson (1981) suggest that there are at least seven major categories of international schools. Beyond Leach's four categories, there are international schools with a distinctive international education curriculum. These include international Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) world schools, United World College schools, and International School Services (ISS) schools. A study of international teacher perceptions of international schools revealed that most teachers believe a standard international curriculum is pragmatic necessity (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). However, it is not a necessity because a sixth category includes international schools that educate multinational students without an international curriculum or prescribing to one particular national curriculum. These schools may adopt a curriculum or set of standards from different countries in order to fit their needs. Finally, a significant number of international schools are deemed expatriate national schools that also work towards global citizenship goals (Hayden & Thompson, 1995). These schools are internationally minded but keep to a particular national curriculum. These include cooperative community schools that were

founded by an American community as a joint venture and expanded towards a more globally minded mission (Brown, 2000). Christian religious schools, embassy or consulate schools, corporate schools, and Department of Defense schools are other types of international schools that fit loosely into one or more of the aforementioned categories.

Clearly, there are myriad characterizations of international schools. This makes it difficult for scholars to establish a common definition. For example, Robert Belle-Isle (1986) challenges that international schools can only be those who offer a globally recognized diploma. On the other hand, Charles A. Gellar (1981) proposes that the primary characterization of an international school is one that welcomes pupils of many nations and cultures, recognizes that such pupils have differing aims, and actively adjusts its curriculum to meet those aims. While many have sought to provide a concrete definition that captures the essence of all international schools, perhaps their diverse contexts actually prevent the development of a formalized description. Edna Murphy (2000), concludes that:

Maybe it is time...to stop trying to organize the unorganizable by dint of words alone... We might want to accept, finally, that we do not in this community, speak with one voice; that we are educators with different experiences and backgrounds, working in many different kinds of schools for different reasons, and whose common enterprise reflects a rich variety of approaches; and that we may or may not eventually arrive at a point where we conform to a single vision.

It is entirely possible that international schools encompass a broad variety of characteristics, which overlap one another. By narrowing international schools into a

singular definition, we blind ourselves to the fantastic diversity that makes these schools such distinctive organizations. Gellar (1981) captures the dilemma well by simply stating that international schools “mean all to some and little to many.”

The life force of all international schools is composed of expatriate families, the educators, and the students. Research points to the vital role an international school has in creating a cohesive international expatriate community. In describing these communities, Werna D. Gillies (2001) remarks that it is not unusual to have upwards of 30 nationalities represented in the overseas school student body. Moreover, international school communities experience a high turnover rate and are in a constant state of flux (Hayden & Thompson, 1998). Despite the highly mobile features of this population, close-knit communities are formed, in which there is a great deal of parental involvement. A bond exists among international school community members because they share a common experience. Their current home country is usually different from the country of their passport and they live a nomadic lifestyle (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

The international school community plays an essential role when families settle into a new country. The school acts as a welcome center and helps with the orientation of students, parents and teachers to a new country. They oftentimes act as a liaison between the expatriate and the local government, school officials are advocates for community members and have close relationships with embassy personnel. The school is not only a place for education but for student and adult social opportunities. International schools are where life long relationships are formed (Jonietz, 1991). This means that international

school activities are often well supported and attended (Gillies, 2001). The schools are busy after school and on the weekends, similar to a small town community center. Each international school community has its own distinct feel and priorities. This helps to shape the experiences of the transient children who populate international schools.

While economic globalization brings multinational companies together, social globalization brings together multinational families. These families are members of a dynamic community of sojourners. Highly mobile global families often find connections between international school communities and can quickly establish relationships when they move to another country. It is much like an extended family, where there are as few as two degrees of separation among individuals. International school community members enjoy learning about the countries and experiences of other global nomads. Through the stories, personal connections and experiences they share, these global nomads develop a deep understanding of internationalism.

Intercultural interactions are a daily occurrence within international schools. Each of these schools has a multicultural context at all levels of their structure. Students, teachers, administrators, support personnel, and board members have a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They also bring diverse cultural affiliations, social capital and understandings of power. Due to the multicultural nature of the school community, it is assumed that cultural competency is developed as if by osmosis (Luebke & Gaw, 2000). Rather than providing intentional professional development, culturally responsive pedagogy, and curricular programming, the school

community moves about its business as if this will all happen naturally. After all, most of the teachers, administrators, and families chose to move to an overseas location.

International schools, like most schools, are hierarchical institutions that must find ways to deal with issues of race, privilege, ethnicity, and oppression. While one may wonder why cultural competency work is essential within such privileged school communities, taking the perspective of an Eastern culture student of color on a typical day illustrates an assortment of issues. The American or European centric curriculum and pedagogy may be at odds with this student's upbringing, values, and priorities. Mixed gender collaborative grouping is commonplace in the international school classroom. This may cause some distress for students whose family cultures prefer individualize learning or discourage gender mixing. Moreover, social interactions with peers are often determined by the student's knowledge of American culture and ways of relating to others. American male students have a distinct advantage when they call for an American touch football game at recess. In schools with uniform policies, girls who wear more conservative or non-Western clothing envy girls whose parents buy the current Western fashions. Students with access to American candies, music, and videos that are not readily available in the host country or who come with particular skills in Western athletics and musicianship are able to secure social power among their peers. In these instances, students with a White American or Western European cultural background participate in a school program that is *normal*. They are afforded the privilege of a full understanding of how to interact within his or her social structure.

From a historical perspective, the relationship between colonialism and the international school community provides insight into the necessity of bringing intentionality to cultural competency. With the rise of mercantilism came the search for trade, and ultimately, colonialism to maintain the sources of raw materials. The Europeans who established colonies were not interested in intercultural development. Rather, they were concerned with protecting their businesses and their government's economic power. The colonial model describes the ethnocentric perspective. The primarily White European colonists exercised their power within a foreign country and chose to lead insulated lives. Remnants of this not-so-distant past are evidenced as mono-cultural or national curricula schools, sheltered expatriate neighborhoods, American or European grocery stores, and exclusive sporting and leisure clubs that serve expatriate communities. An American family moving overseas, has the option of remaining in an isolated expatriate American bubble within a foreign country. Of course, not all families participate in this segregated lifestyle. Many families do choose to interact with and learn about the people native to their country of residence. The key is that they're afforded the privilege of choice. Choosing to live overseas does not equate ethnorelativism. Likewise, developing an ethnorelative perspective and cultural competency are not prerequisites for acceptance into an international school.

International school teachers also possess a broad developmental spectrum of cultural competency. Daryle Russell and Jane Larsson (2000) suggest that teachers seek international school positions for a host of reasons. Many are seeking adventure, a chance

for travel, and to experience other cultures. Others are looking for lucrative opportunities to have a career in education with a higher salary, housing allowances, high quality health insurance, home travel perks, and a chance to save. Still others believe they're fulfilling a higher purpose by working as a teacher overseas and others are exploring opportunities to evangelize. International schools also employ teachers who are running away from challenges that they experienced at home. Essentially, securing a position in an international school and moving abroad are not indicators of cultural competence.

Although the school staffers do not have the salaries, housing, and other perks enjoyed by many more affluent business employees and dependents, they do face relationships with the host country not unlike those of a large majority of these and other expatriates; and they have the same need to develop intercultural sensitivity (Luebke & Gaw, 2000).

Given the international context, expatriate cultural competency and intercultural sensitivity development look different from the traditional American examples in the literature. However, the process of cultural competency development within American and expatriate contexts are parallel. This rigorous and rewarding work involves movement from a biased ethnocentric perspective to an inclusive ethnorelative perspective (Luebke & Gaw, 2000). Expatriates who maintain an ethnocentric worldview often make assumptions that their way is the better way. For example, that the American way of doing something is far superior to their host country. Ethnocentric expatriates may comment that developing nations are far behind the more advanced First World nations. In international communities, ethnocentrism is also seen through the behaviors of many expatriates. This includes intentional segregation such as participating in expatriate-only

clubs and using drivers or taxis to avoid interactions with the people who are native to the country. Other examples include disrespectful behavior around religious establishments, sharing ethnic jokes and blatantly vocalizing racist comments.

Expatriates in the ethnocentric phase may also live in isolated expatriate communities that are similar to colonial settlements. These expatriate enclaves provide enormous distance between the expatriate families and their host country. They shop for American products, only interact with other American families, watch American television programming and sporting events, attend American curriculum international schools, and employ domestic help who are ethnically different from themselves. This lifestyle decreases the amount of intercultural interaction the expatriate has with people from the host country. Furthermore, negative judgments about the host country are made based on the expatriate's belief that their lifestyle is superior to those who are native to the host country. In this context, the ethnocentric individual uses the term, American, to describe White and middle to upper class Americans. It lends to binary thinking such as we/they, right/wrong, and moral/immoral.

Many other expatriates operate within the Minimization stage. These individuals falsely assume that they are culturally competent because they downplay cultural differences. Those in Minimization find it alluring to minimize the differences and celebrate the commonalities that all humans share. However, this implicitly states that the expatriate's culture defines the norms. From a place of privilege, an expatriate in the

Minimization stage can see that all people are the same and admonish those that point out cultural differences. Universalism requires the culturally diverse groups of people to conform to the dominant expatriate culture.

In international school literature, individuals who grow up as Third Culture Kids (TCKs) are characterized with an ethnorelative identity. This is a person who has a mixed cultural identity because they've grown up in a multinational and multicultural environment. Global Nomads (GNs) are similar to TCKs but they also experience rootlessness. They possess a high degree of mobility and develop a sense that their *home* encompasses the entire world. Yet, TCKs' or GNs' cultural competency is dependent on their self-awareness, awareness and acceptance of culturally diverse people as equal to themselves, skill at negotiating intercultural interactions, and actualization of ethnorelative practices.

Expatriates in the ethnorelative phase of the continuum are able to differentiate cultural differences, respect those difference and live efficaciously with cultural differences (Luebke & Gaw, 2000). Expatriates who consciously address nonverbal communication styles between themselves and their hosts characterize this phase. They accept that the people from their host country have different worldviews and ways to express themselves. Expatriates in the ethnorelative stage also empathize with the culturally different and seamlessly navigate the host country environment. In international schools, this is seen when teachers plan lessons that accommodate various

cultures, socialize with culturally different people without an attempt to change their way of being, evaluate issues from multiple perspectives, and see alternative viewpoints as valid.

Despite vast anecdotal evidence, the research on cultural competencies and intercultural development within the international school context is limited. Researchers such as David A. Straffon, Jan M. Westrick and Celeste Y. Yuen have found that international school teachers and students tend to have a heightened level of intercultural sensitivity. The relationship between ethnorelative worldviews and Third Culture Kids is strong, which suggests that an international upbringing may help people to accept cultural differences in an efficacious manner. However the results are not as conclusive for international school teachers. The research suggests that international school teachers are moving towards ethnorelativism. However, most experienced international school teachers are still entrenched in the Minimization stage (Westrick & Yuen, 2007).

Researchers note that schools where international education is practiced are frequently sites of cultural pluralism and multiculturalism, either because of the diversity of nationalities represented among the students or because of the synthesis of a *third culture* from the collision between expatriate and host country cultures (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; R. H. Useem & Downie, 1976). This shows promise that with intentional training and curricular programming, international schools may facilitate growth towards culturally competent practices. In a broader sense, perhaps international schools may play a part in the widening, deepening and the speeding up worldwide

interconnectedness (Held et al., 1999). With the growing numbers of international schools and students who are educated in these institutions, we must consider how culture competence plays out within their walls.

Third Culture Kids

A wealth of international school research investigates the experience and characteristics of children who attend international schools. These globally mobile children comprise a population that Ruth H. Useem (1976) coined “Third Culture Kids”. These children form a unique, third culture that is separate from their country of origin but also differs from the host country in which they live (Gerner & Perry, 2000). David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken (1999) developed a definition of Third Culture Kids through compilations of research in the area:

A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of a similar background.

These children are all influenced by globalization because they are raised in a highly mobile world, which is truly cross-cultural (Cockburn, 2003). Although they have a nomadic lifestyle, J. Z. Nathanson and Maureen O. Marcenko (1995) found that these aspects of their international lives do not appear to have negative repercussions. Their study of international school students in Tokyo revealed that students who transferred to Tokyo were satisfied with their lives in their new home. They appeared to experience emotional wellbeing and their families played an integral role in their emotional stability.

In addition, Michael E. Gerner (1992) found that compared to peers who have maintained residency in only one country, internationally mobile adolescents have a greater interest in travel, learning languages, rate themselves as more culturally accepting, and are more oriented to an international lifestyle in the future. This is supported by Straffon's (2001) work on intercultural sensitivity among high school students at an international school in Malaysia. His research supports the assumption that students who attend international schools have high levels of intercultural sensitivity. Moreover, the length of time that students attend international schools has a significant positive relationship with heightened intercultural sensitivity.

Laura Cockburn (2003) relates that Third Culture Kids are flexible and adaptable because they learn to deal with transitions and change. On the other hand, these children have difficulties with identity, relationships and stability. The unconscious process of seeing two or more different images of themselves can cause Third Culture Kids to question their identity (Isogai, Hayashi, & Uno, 1999). Furthermore, outside of the international community, these children may experience marginality because they do not feel as if they necessarily belong to one culture. When repatriating into their *home* country, TCKs may feel isolated and disconnected from their peers who grew up in one country and do not possess a global perspective.

Hong Kong Based International Schools

Hong Kong's international schools account for 36 systems that include 47 different institutions. This affords research in Hong Kong's international schools a unique

perspective because they form a microcosm of the wider field of comparative education (Bray & Yamato, 2003). The first school catering to expatriate families opened in 1855 but closed after only five years. A closer successor, the Kowloon British School opened in 1902. It evolved into the Central British School and then the King George V. School, which maintains a strong presence among today's Hong Kong schools (Sweeting, 1990).

All school systems within Hong Kong operate under the Hong Kong Education Bureau's regulations. This means that the schools adhere to the territory's legal, political and economic framework. Hong Kong schools are subject to high land prices and an urban student demographic. Most international school clientele are from high socioeconomic levels and most families are either expatriate, have strong international orientations or have close relatives living abroad (Bray & Yamato, 2003). Interestingly, there is considerable internal and external mobility within Hong Kong's international school student population. It is not uncommon for students to move between Hong Kong's international schools because parents are seeking more competitive schooling options for their children (Bray & Yamato, 2003).

The economic boom of the 1990s "attracted thousands of foreign companies to set up beachhead operations in Hong Kong" (Kwong, 1993). With the rapidly expanding economy and the attraction of multinational companies, came a greater demand for international schools. These schools have a wealth of diversity and essentially provide a microcosm of cross-national student population samples that are typical of many comparative studies (Westrick, 2004). Rather than focusing on large scale comparative

studies, researchers such as Mark Bray of the Comparative Education Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong suggest that a depth of knowledge may be uncovered on a smaller scale. Bray notes that, “Much work is needed to compare schools, classrooms, and individuals in both Hong Kong and China” (Bray, 1999).

Perhaps as expected, studies indicate that international school teachers in Hong Kong have a higher level of intercultural sensitivity than their colleagues in national based schools (Westrick & Yuen, 2007). Researchers found that experience living in other cultures was the strongest predictor of strong Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) scores. However, the research also showed that most teachers had not resolved issues around Minimization. This is interesting because although teachers in one international school had resolved many of their issues within the Integration stage and were able to live among various cultures, they still had unresolved issues in the Minimization stage. This suggests that merely experiencing different cultures does not guarantee development in intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993; Westrick, 2004). This research helps to elucidate teacher cultural competency in international schools but does not seek to explore relationships between cultural competency and student success.

Conceptual Foundation of School Engagement

Schooling is a cultural phenomenon and learning is socially constructed. As such, it is important to note that school engagement within the traditional framework of schools may vary among cultural groups. Closely examining the composition of school

engagement allows scholars to determine whether external factors such as teachers, school climate, instructional strategies, etc., have an impact on students' engagement.

The school engagement literature often describes a polarized debate between progressive and liberal educators (Hirst & Peters, 1970). Shelby L. Sheppard (2011) examined literature from both perspectives to delineate the differences and similarities between the two. Sheppard noted that liberals regard engagement as the self-imposed commitment an individual makes to further his or her understanding of content. This takes the form of "an engagement in something" (Sheppard, 2011). The liberal perspective asserts that engagement is initiated by the learner and involves a personal undertaking. Therefore, the engaged individual assumes the intrinsic value of worthwhile knowledge and understanding. The liberals place the primary responsibility of engagement on the learner rather than the teacher or conditions of the classroom.

On the other hand, progressives such as John Dewey describe engagement as a holistic process where educators provide the conditions in which engaged learning takes place. This is in sharp contrast to the liberal perspective because progressive scholars place the responsibility of engagement on the teachers. This type of engagement is more procedural. In order to cultivate engagement, teachers must create the ideal conditions to arouse the learner's curiosity. The progressives assert that a teacher's primary role is to develop attitudes of inquiry in the learner (Sheppard, 2011). Therefore, high student engagement is the result of pedagogical techniques and produces learners who discover the intrinsic value of education.

This study takes into account both the liberal and the progressive views of education and describes engagement as a “psychological process, specifically, the attention, interest, investment, and effort students expend in the work of learning” (Marks, 2000). While the individual most certainly needs to take responsibility in their learning, teachers play an important role in sparking the engagement of their students. Engagement is presumed to be malleable. It results from an interaction of the individual within the classroom context and is responsive to variation in the classroom environment (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). The study of school engagement can present challenges because factors such as family, community, culture, and the educational context may all influence levels of engagement (Mehan et al., 1996; Ogbu, 2003). Thus, it is important to identify whether a study seeks to capture a wider view of students’ school engagement or their classroom engagement with a particular teacher. In both instances, studies indicate that engagement positively influences achievement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). In practice, educators are seeking strategies to improve student engagement because it can be intentionally manipulated and predicts positive student achievement.

Classroom Engagement and Disaffection

School engagement researchers describe school engagement as a multifaceted construct. In particular, there is a distinct difference between substantive and procedural engagement. Much of the classroom engagement research tends to examine procedural engagement because it emphasizes task completion, actions and strategies. These

attributes of engagement are more concrete and straightforward in measurement. On the other hand, fewer studies look at the sustained commitment to schooling, substantive engagement or the conceptualization of motivation. To expand upon the multifaceted nature of engagement, Jennifer A. Fredricks, Phyllis C. Blumenfeld and Alison A. Paris (2004) surveyed the educational literature. They discovered three main types of engagements: behavioral, emotional and cognitive. Although Fredricks and colleagues (2004) identified the three types of engagement, they also point out that there is overlap between them. Behavioral engagement and cognitive engagement are closely paired together. Similarly, behavioral and emotional engagement share some characteristics. In addition to measuring classroom engagement subconstructs, the study of disengagement is recommended. In looking at both engagement and disengagement, researchers have a better sense of a student's complete engagement profile.

In a recent study, Ellen A. Skinner and colleagues (in print) propose that researchers focus on four indicators of student engagement. The indicators of engagement are: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, and Emotional Disaffection. Within this model, cognitive engagement overlaps with behavioral engagement as a form of academic engagement. However, the intent in Skinner's model (in print) is to measure behavioral and emotional classroom engagement. Connell and Welborn (1991) note that researchers must also explore *disengagement*. Disengagement may also be termed, *disaffection*. The markers of engaged behavior include persistence, concentration, effort exertion, interest and enjoyment. Conversely,

the markers for disaffection include passivity, giving up, frustration, and anxiety. While it is critical to investigate aspects of students' engagement in the classroom, it is equally important to probe into the absence of engagement.

Structural analyses highlight that the four indicators provide a better fit to the student engagement construct than either unidimensional models or bipolar models (Skinner, in print). As a complex construct with integrated dimensions, researchers suggest that all components should be studied simultaneously rather than in isolation (Glanville & Wildhagen, 2007).

Behavioral Engagement and Disaffection

Behavioral Engagement is derived from participation and social bonding models. Essentially, Behavioral Engagement is defined as doing schoolwork and following the rules (National Center for School Engagement, 2006). It primarily refers to actions such as doing the compulsory work and following the required rules. Participation in activities, positive conduct, concentration, effort, and contributing to class discussions are also factors in Behavioral Engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

Educational researchers frequently use Jeremy D. Finn's (1989) participation-identification model to account for the Behavioral Engagement of students who drop out of school. This model consists of four levels that explore a student's level of participation in academic and nonacademic school activities. Students who operate within the upper levels of the participation model are considered to have higher levels of Behavioral Engagement (Fredricks, et al., 2004).

Behavioral and Emotional Engagement are closely related because as students report higher levels of belonging, their behavior falls in line with the school expectations. Engagement models where the two main dimensions are psychological and behavioral clearly demonstrate this relationship (Finn, 1989; Wehlage et al., 1989; Newman et al., 1992). School bonding is a crucial element of Behavioral Engagement because students with weaker school bonds are more likely to engage in inappropriate behavior (Finn, 1993). The behavioral component may be related to participation or a lack of participation in an activity. Whereas, the psychological component is related to students' emotions. This may manifest as positive characteristic, such as commitment to the school and bonding with adults or peers at school. However, students may demonstrate negative affect through behaviors such as frustration, alienation, and distress (Finn, 1993).

Behavioral disengagement may be operationalized by passivity, lack of initiation and giving up (Murdock, 1999; Vallerand, 1997). When a student cannot voluntarily exit a class by dropping out or leave the school, they may withdraw their participation. This withdrawal may be exhibited as a lack of attention, completing the minimum amount of work to pass the class, and pretending to participate in activities.

Robert A. Sullo (2007) describes the importance of internal control psychology on students' engagement and academic achievement. Through an analysis of control psychology research in schools, Sullo concludes that teachers who employ internal control psychology strategies have fewer behavioral issues and higher academic achievement. This model respects students as active, goal-driven, and internally

motivated people who make the choice to be engaged in school and to strive for academic success.

Emotional Engagement and Disaffection

Emotional Engagement is defined as the interests, values and emotions involved in learning (National Center for School Engagement, 2006). This includes positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academics, and school. Presumably, the willingness to do the work is related to the school and classroom. Emotional Engagement refers to students' affective reactions to their classrooms that include interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; E. A. Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Finn (1989) defines identification as belonging (a feeling of being important to the school) and value (an appreciation of success in school related outcomes). Emotions in the student engagement construct overlap with motivational research (Fredricks et al., 2004). Yet the research is not clear whether students' positive emotions are directed toward academic content, their friends, or the teacher.

Fredricks and colleagues (2004) assert that there are three main antecedents of engagement. School-level factors, classroom context and individual needs all influence student engagement. Teacher support and the need for relatedness are perhaps the two most influential factors on students' Emotional Engagement.

Research indicates that teacher support impacts behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). Teacher support can be academic or interpersonal and most studies do not distinguish between the two. Ellen A. Skinner and

Michael J. Belmont (1993) found that teacher involvement was positively associated with engagement. In turn, the higher student engagement elicited greater teacher involvement. Researchers note that the correlation of teacher support and Emotional Engagement has been conducted in a primarily White middle-class sample (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). This leaves room for additional exploratory studies with diverse groups of students.

The need for relatedness is also a strong factor in student Emotional Engagement. It is assumed that students will be more engaged when classroom contexts satisfy their needs for relatedness. This is most likely to occur in classrooms where teachers and peers create a caring and supportive environment. Carrie J. Furrer and Skinner (2003) found that perceived relatedness to teachers, parents, and peers uniquely contributed to Emotional Engagement. Furthermore, using a combined measure of Emotional and Behavioral Engagement, Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (1994) found that middle school students who felt more secure with teachers had higher engagement.

Students that experience Emotional Disaffection are effectively withdrawing their connection to the class. Typically, this occurs when students cannot physically remove themselves from the class and they develop emotions related to apathy and helplessness. Disaffected emotions are expressed as enervated emotion. Examples of disaffection are being tired, sad, or bored. Often, this is accompanied by anxiety due to the pressure of continual attendance and participation in the class. In addition, students may feel

frustrated, angry, or alienated. When exploring Emotional Engagement, the range of Emotional Disaffection should also be measured (Skinner, in print).

Cognitive Engagement

The National Center for School Engagement (2006) defines cognitive engagement as the motivation, effort and strategy that students use. Cognitive engagement is related to motivational goals and self-regulated learning. The research and literature stress investment in learning, self-regulation and being strategic. Within cognitive engagement, two sets of research focus on the psychological investment in learning and strategic learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). Cognitive engagement is closely related to Behavioral Engagement, in that both are considered academic engagement.

Scholars who define academic engagement through a cognitive-psychological lens pull from motivation literature. Fred M. Newman and colleagues (1992) describe engagement as, “The student’s psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, mastering the knowledge, skills or crafts that the academic work is intended to promote.” Similarly, Jere Brophy (1987) suggests that a motivated student values learning and strives for knowledge and mastery in learning situations. Carol S. Dweck (2006) puts forth the idea of a fixed or growth mindset. Much of her research involves cognitive engagement in tasks and the intrinsic motivation necessary to take on challenges.

Strategic or self-regulated learning is another component of cognitive engagement. This involves the use of learning strategies to maintain engagement in a task

and the ability to persist despite distractions. Rehearsal, summarization and elaboration are learning strategies that demonstrate strategic cognitive engagement (Corno & Madinach, 1983; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Students who are able to suppress interruptions and show resiliency in learning use self-regulation to maintain their engagement (Corno, 1993; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

School Engagement and Achievement

The central focus of engagement is the quality of a student's connection and involvement in schooling (Skinner, et al., in print). Studies show that engagement has a significant and direct effect on achievement (Connell, et al., 1994; Fredricks & Eccles, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Skinner et al., 1990). Students who are engaged in their learning, trust their teachers and school, have choice, are made to feel competent and have a sense of belonging are more invested in their education (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Glasser, 2003; Kim & Hwang, 2001; Pease & Law, 2000).

Students are driven to connect with others. When they secure a connection with their teacher, the motivation to be competent leads to academic achievement. In other words, the relational trust between the student and teacher lends to higher academic achievement (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). On the other hand, adversarial relationships or simply a lack of trust is associated with behaviorally, emotionally and cognitively disengaged students. When students are disengaged, their academic achievement also falters.

The literature also highlights that factors such as race, socioeconomic status, gender, educational track, family cultural capital, and behavioral engagement account for some variance in school achievement in statistical analyses (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999; Singh, et al., 2002; Smerdon, 1999). While the research shows that school engagement and achievement are positively correlated, scholars state that the exploration of student engagement must continue. By examining the relationship between perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement, educators will gain a deeper understanding of student engagement.

Conclusion

Rapid advancements in technology and globalization are pushing the boundaries of environmental resources, human conflict, economic prosperity, social equity, and creativity. This funnels down to the K12 school environment and requires a specialized approach that is significantly different from thirty years ago. Moreover, it means that educators are preparing students for a future that we do not fully understand. We do know that it is increasingly important for people to work collaboratively, with mutual respect in a pluralistic society. Teachers must develop and refine their cross-cultural pedagogy to satisfy the needs of a diverse population of students.

Cultural competence is a thinly researched field and yet it has a huge potential for providing lasting positive change in schools. By employing cultural competency in the classroom, teachers communicate an unconditional positive regard for students that may impact student engagement and learning. This research will inform educational practice,

policy, and professional development. By instilling cultural competence in education, students reap the benefit of teachers who have a higher capacity to teach them with our diverse classroom settings.

Chapter Three: Methods

The student population of international schools is essentially a microcosm of cross-national samples typical of many comparative studies. ...Schools in Hong Kong, like others around the world that are serious about the success of all students, need teachers who are 'prepared to address the substantial diversity in experiences children bring with them to school - the wide range of languages, cultures, exceptionalities, learning styles, talents and intelligences that in turn requires an equally rich and varied repertoire of teaching strategies.'

(Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; Westrick, 2004)

Research Design

This study examined the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement through a non-experimental research design. Consequently, the researcher did not implement a treatment, manipulate a variable, nor use random assignment procedures. The present study maintained a cross-sectional design, meaning that the data were collected at one point-in-time rather in a longitudinal manner. Therefore, the data analysis described the perceptions of cultural competency and its relationship to student engagement between the participants. As an exploratory study, the data collected by the researcher reflected the current state of the instructional setting as experienced by the sample population within this study.

Survey Methodology

The present study employed a survey methodology within an exploratory research design. John W. Creswell (2003) related that a survey design quantitatively describes

trends, attitudes and characteristics of a population through the study of a sample. The Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) is designed for a teacher self-report of cultural competency. The Student Engagement Survey is designed for students to self-report on engagement in a particular teacher's class and perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency. The purpose of survey research is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude or behavior of the population (Babbie, 1990; Groves, et al., 2004). The resulting statistics were used to describe the basic characteristics or experiences of large and small populations of the world. The survey is the preferred type of data collection for this study because surveys are easily accessible, economical, and have a rapid turnaround in data collection.

Moreover, the use of electronic surveys was cost effective, and had a quick distribution and response cycle (Andrews, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003). The electronic surveys were also time efficient because the researcher did not have to input responses into statistical software. Instead, the data was exported directly into the statistical software.

There were limitations in using questionnaires within a survey methodology and specifically with an online format. The teacher questionnaires were administered in a relatively uncontrolled setting of the real world. In turn, a variety of confounding variables could influence the results of the survey. For example, if a participant had an argument stemming from a cross-cultural misunderstanding before taking the survey, that individual's cultural competency data may have been inaccurate. In addition, the study was based on the inferential power of sampling from a microcosm of a large population.

This means that generalizations are limited by the sampling. Furthermore, attrition may increased if individual considered the technical aspects of the survey to be complicated. Additional participant privacy and confidentiality statements were also used in the online surveys. Due to the flexibility of the Internet and the existence of web-based false identities, precautions were taken to create trust with participants through researcher credibility and by an observance of confidentiality issues, while ensuring the reliability of the data. As Internet users, the participants may have been particularly sensitive to intrusion and the researcher exercised respect of the participants' right to privacy (Andrews et al., 2003).

Setting and Participants

The focus of this study included perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement within international schools in Hong Kong. The participants involved in this research were high school teachers and students, in grades nine through twelve. Two international high schools participated and all students received a Parental Consent through homeroom to be reviewed, signed by a parent and returned. In addition, all teachers had an opportunity to learn about the study during a faculty meeting, received an information sheet about the study, and had access to the online consent form. With a delimiting factor of self-selection through submission of consent forms, this study retained a convenience sample of 70 teachers and 525 students.

School Site 1 (SS1) was founded in 2000 as a private, tuition-based international school. The school was an inquiry-based, child centered school for students from

preschool (age 3) through high school. The school was designed to be an international school with a small, close-knit community and intentional diversity through their admissions process. This school may be classified according to its distinctive international education curriculum, which includes the full International Baccalaureate framework (Hayden & Thompson, 1998). This included the Primary Years, Middle Years and Diploma Program, with daily Mandarin lessons in the primary grades. The school maintains an intimate learning environment with a student-teacher ratio of 6:1. In the four years before the study, SS1 grew the high school by grade level. During the 2011-2012 school year, SS1 served 66 high school students and many of the Upper School teaching staff taught both middle and high school classes. The first cohort of IB Diploma Program students were expected to graduate in June 2012. The entire student body represented 42 nationalities, with no one country holding a majority. The 21 Upper School teaching staff accounted for 10 different nationalities. Most of the teachers were American, followed by Canadian, Australian and UK passport holders. All student and teacher participants had access to laptop computers to participate in the online surveys.

School Site 2 (SS2) was a private, international school serving approximately 2,600 students in reception one (age 4) through twelfth grade. The students at the school reported over 40 nationalities and participated in an American-style curriculum. The school was founded in the 1960s with a religious affiliation and is an entirely tuition-based school. During the 2011-2012 school year, the high school served 763 students between the ages of 13-19 years. Over 50-percent of the student body held a United

States passport, followed by Canadian and Hong Kong passport holders at eight-percent. Students that graduated from SS2 predominately sought universities in the United States for their post secondary education. SS2 possessed a small student-teacher ratio of 10:1 with maximum class sizes of 18-20 students. The nationalities of the 65 teaching staff and counselors comprised over 10 countries but were primarily U.S. citizens. This was followed by Canadian and Australian faculty. All student and teacher participants possessed a laptop through the school's 1:1 Apple laptop program. SS2 may be classified as an expatriate national school that maintains international goals. While the student body maintains a diverse international population, the school intends to matriculate students to American universities. Moreover, many of the families transition to Hong Kong for a few years before returning back to the United States. Therefore, the curriculum and educational structure is intentionally American (Hayden & Thompson, 1995).

Research Variables

Explanatory Variables

Within this study, the primary explanatory variable was the aggregate measure of cultural competency (CC). The methodology was designed to measure cultural competency from both the teacher perspective and from students' perspectives. In addition, this research examined the relationship of the explanatory variable's three subconstructs of cultural competency: knowledge, skill, and behavior. The primary explanatory variable was measured by items adapted from Culhane-Pera and colleagues (1997) survey. These items included, "I am comfortable discussing the important cultural

influences of five students” and “I need to understand students’ cultural perspectives in order to provide effective instruction.”

Response Variables

The response variable in this study was student engagement (SE). The central relationship under examination was the extent and manner in which cultural competency predicts student engagement within this sample of international school teachers. Student Engagement included four subconstructs: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement and Emotional Disaffection. The variable was measured by items adapted from the Engagement versus Disengagement with Learning Student-Report (EvsD) developed by Dr. Ellen Skinner (1991). Student engagement was measured with items including, “When I get stuck on a problem, I know my teacher will support me” and “When we work on something in this class, I get involved.” In addition, the survey included items adapted from the MAQ to capture students’ perceptions of teacher cultural competency. These included questions such as, “This teacher values the cultural commonalities and differences among students in this class.”

Demographic Analysis Variables

This study examined the relationship between cultural competency and student engagement while it controlled for each of the following demographic variables: gender, ethnicity, nationality, age, years living overseas, highest level of education completed, years of international school experience, and number of languages spoken. These

variables were chosen based on previous research in intercultural sensitivity (Straffon, 2001; J. Westrick & Yuen, 2007) and cultural intelligence (Sims, 2011).

Instrumentation

Self-awareness assessments measure the impact of attitudinally based factors designed to address the motivational framework of experience, attitude, knowledge and skill that underlie behavior (Nuñez, 2000). The present study used two online surveys managed through Survey Monkey, which were modified from previous research in cultural competency and student engagement.

The teacher Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire consisted of 35 items (Appendix B). The modified MAQ originated from a 16-item Likert-scale instrument designed by Culhane-Pera and colleagues (1997) for use with undergraduate medical students. This contained specific cultural knowledge, skill, and attitude objectives that helped learners to achieve the Acceptance stage of Bennett's model or the Precompetence stage of Lindsey's model. In Culhane-Pera's MAQ, a Level 3 (Cultural Precompetence) indicated that the individual accepted the role of cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors on education and student engagement. This was deemed as an appropriate level of cultural competence for individuals entering the medical field.

To date, the MAQ has been used in three published studies as a measure of cultural competency. While validity data does not exist for the MAQ, Crandall and colleagues (2003) asserted that it is a reliable instrument for examining cultural competency. The MAQ maintained internal consistency reliability (Crandall et al., 2003;

Thompson et al., 2010). In Crandall's study, the Cronbach's alpha for the pre and post MAQs ranged from 0.88-0.89. Similarly, in Thompson's study (2010), the Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.87-0.94 for self reports, perceptions of their resident's cultural competency and their attending's cultural competency. As in previous studies using the MAQ, the researcher believed that the instrument has face validity.

The Teacher MAQ included eleven demographic questions, with one continuous data item. In addition, 25 questions focused on measuring the construct, international school teachers' cultural competency. The response requirements on a five-point scale were fully anchored at disagree, somewhat disagree, uncertain, somewhat agree, and agree. A five-point scale purposefully allows for a neutral response. The survey required respondents to complete each question in a section before moving on to the next page, therefore participants were not able to provide non-response items.

The Student Engagement Survey consisted of 44 items, where 36 related to the construct, class engagement (Appendix C). The Student Engagement Survey was modified from the Engagement versus Disaffection with Learning (EvsD) student self-report. The original survey was a 20-item Likert-scale instrument designed by Skinner and colleagues (1991) to measure motivation in the academic domain. Within the original instrument, 17 items allow for additional variations of emotional and Behavioral Engagement. Since its development, the EvsD has been used or referenced in four published student engagement and motivation studies (Furrer, C., & Skinner, E., 2003;

Patrick, B., Skinner, E., & Connell, J., 1993; Skinner, E. & Belmont, M., 1993; Skinner, E., 1998).

The EvsD student self-report survey included questions related to Behavioral Engagement, Behavior Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, and Emotional Disaffection. In previous studies Skinner and colleagues statistically differentiated between the four subconstructs of student engagement. However, Skinner (in print) recommended that the four subfactors should be analyzed together, “Unless there exists a clear theoretical rationale for contrasting their individual effects or examining specific combinations.” A structural analysis indicated that a multidimensional student engagement structure is a better fit for the data than a uni-dimensional structure. Essentially, this was because the four types of engagement capture the core construct. Internal consistency reliabilities were generally adequate at 0.70 or above for student-report scores. The researchers also considered the instrument to maintain face validity.

The Student Engagement Survey included nine demographic questions, with one continuous data item. In addition, 36 questions focused on measuring the construct, student engagement. The response requirements on a five-point scale were fully anchored at disagree, somewhat disagree, uncertain, somewhat agree, and agree. A five-point scale purposefully allows for a neutral response. The survey required respondents to complete each question in a section before moving on to the next page, therefore participants were not able to provide a non-response item.

Procedure

The study collected data through two online surveys and samples from a representative population of teachers and students in private international schools based in Hong Kong. Teacher participants for the study self-selected after an email invitation to participate by a school administrator and a short introduction to the study by the researcher during a faculty meeting. To encourage a higher teacher response rate, four gift certificates and one iPad were promoted as rewards to five randomly selected participants at the end of the study. Teachers self-selected their participation through the completion of the MAQ online survey during the one-week administration window.

The student online surveys were anonymous, while the teacher online surveys were confidential. Students were not be asked to include their names or identification numbers. To maintain teacher confidentiality, a school administrator at each School Site received a batch of coded numbers. They randomly assigned numbers to the teachers and provided each teacher with their special number on a slip of paper. Teachers input this number as the first demographic question on their survey. Students also keyed in the code number provided by their teacher to indicate the class in which they completed the survey. Afterward, the school administrator shredded the teacher number assignments and the researcher never received this information.

All students in grades nine to twelve received Parental Consent forms in their homeroom classes and were given at least two weeks to return the signed form. Teachers and/or the school administrator reminded students periodically during the two weeks to

return the form. At the end of the two weeks, the teachers returned the consent forms to the school administration. The researcher created a spreadsheet of student names and corresponding grade levels so that teachers would know which students had permission to complete the survey on the administration date. Student participants self-selected through the Parental Consent Form, attendance on the day of the survey administration, and participation during their class period(s).

The online survey format facilitated data collection and ensured anonymity of the participants. Moreover, it allowed for the effective administration of the survey and collection of data from two schools located in Hong Kong. School Site 1 and 2 both had laptop programs or readily available desktop computers, therefore the administration of the online surveys happened in classrooms.

Teachers administered the Student Engagement survey in the first period that they taught on the administration day. In both schools, the class size ranged from as few as 3 students to 22 students during the first period that teachers taught on the administration day. The Student Engagement survey took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the demographic and student engagement questions. The Student Engagement surveys were completed by each of the School Sites during March 2012. Once submitted, the online survey the data were collected through SurveyMonkey software registered to the researcher. The school site administrator was available to help any teachers troubleshoot if they into problems with the survey administration.

Each teacher completed the online Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire within one week of the Student Engagement survey administration. Teachers that wished to participate in the prize drawing submitted their email address at the completion of the survey. Their email address was collected through a second survey, linked through the completion redirection option. This allowed for email confidentiality and to permit a random prize drawing.

The data were uploaded into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) for statistical analysis. Each research question was analyzed to support or refute the null hypothesis. In addition, the relationship of the explanatory variable (CC) and response variable (SE) were analyzed with a control for the demographic variables.

Hypotheses

Based of the related literature and previous experience of the research, it was expected that:

1. H_0 = International school teachers' levels of cultural competency will not be normally distributed, as measured by a modified Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (MAQ).

H_1 = International school teachers' levels of cultural competency will be normally distributed, as measured by a modified Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (MAQ).

2. H_0 = There is no relationship between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency.
 H_1 = There is a relationship between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency.
3. H_0 = There is no relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement as measured by the MAQ and Student Engagement Survey.
 H_1 = There is a relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement as measured by the MAQ and Student Engagement Survey.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0) was used as the primary tool for data analyses. The data analyses included descriptive, inferential, bivariate and multivariate types of statistical analyses. Table 3.1 lists a brief outline of the statistical analysis that was done for each research question. As an exploratory study with a convenience sample, there was no manipulation of an independent variable. Therefore, this study uses the terms *explanatory* and *response* variables to describe the relationship between an independent and dependent variable.

Table 3.1

Summary of statistical analysis for the research questions

Research Question	Explanatory Variable	Response Variable	Statistic
1	Exploratory Question	Cultural Competency Score (teacher perception)	Frequency, Mean, Range, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis
2	Length of Time Teaching in International Schools	Cultural Competency Score (teacher perception)	Mean, Std. Deviation, Std. Error, ANOVA
3	Cultural Competency Score (teacher perception)	Student Engagement Score	Mean, Pearson Correlation, ANOVA, Regression Analysis
	Cultural Competency Score (student perception)	Student Engagement Score	Mean, Pearson Correlation, ANOVA, Regression Analysis

Descriptive Analyses

The purpose of the descriptive analysis was to describe, summarize and make sense of the data. Upon completion of the data collection, the survey population's demographic variables were analyzed and presented graphically to ensure a clear understanding of the population. Central tendencies for the individual response items on the survey were conducted along with the explanatory variable, response variable, and subfactors related to each variable. It was important to identify and deal with both outliers and missing data before the inferential analysis. Therefore, tests for homoscedasticity and normality were conducted so that the data could be analyzed for skewness and kurtosis to show normality and linearity.

Inferential Analyses

Following the descriptive analyses, the inferential analyses of the data included a series of independent t-test and ANOVA analyses to determine if there were statistically significant differences in the responses of different groups based on the demographic variables. The t-test is one of the most common statistical significance tests. It is used to determine whether the difference between the means of two variables is statistically significant (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is another statistical test used to compare two or more group means. It is particularly useful when there is a set number of quantitative response variables and with the same number of explanatory variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). These tests were applied to the data for the response and explanatory variables to specify if the demographic variables had significant differences in their responses. This was essential because it determined whether the demographic variables significantly affected the response and/or explanatory data. The variables that did show an association with cultural competency were accounted for before exploring the relationship between perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement.

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis on the measurement models ensured that they were discriminant. In other words, the factor analysis uncovered latent variables that may have accounted for the covariance among a larger set of observed variables. This permitted the researcher to test whether the instruments were valid and which sections provided the closest fitting results. It was important for the researcher to identify items on

the two surveys that did not meet the factor loading threshold so that they could be excluded before further analysis.

Bivariate Analyses

To examine the correlation between the explanatory and response variables, a bivariate analyses was conducted. After all outliers were removed from the data, a Pearson's Correlation showed the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and student engagement. If the relationship between the variables was linear, then a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated. This is the most commonly used correlational coefficient and provides information about the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The correlation coefficient was tested for statistical significance. In addition, the data were analyzed, controlling for the demographic variables to see if there was a correlation between teacher cultural competency and any of the demographics.

Multivariate Analyses

Using the data once the outliers are removed, it underwent a multiple regression analysis. This determined if there were significant correlations between teachers' cultural competency and student engagement. Specifically, it allowed the researcher to look further into the data at the factors for each variable. A regression analysis is a set of statistical procedures used to explain or predict the values of a response variable based on the values of one or more explanatory variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). A Multiple Regression involves two or more explanatory variables. Upon determining a

relationship between teacher cultural competence and student engagement, the hierarchical multiple regression analysis established strength and direction of variance attributed to each of the factors with the explanatory and response variables. In this study, the three subconstructs of cultural competence (knowledge, skills, attitude) were included in the explanatory variable and the response variables were student engagement and its four subconstructs (Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Disaffection). Demographic variables were also of interest, so they were included as analysis variables in the regression equation.

Limitations

Several limitations existed within the methodology of this study. The purposive convenience sampling provided for the most efficient manner of data collection. However, this also decreased the generalizability of the findings. This means that the results of the study were not generalizable to all teachers. Rather, the generalizability focused on a smaller population of international school teachers.

In using a survey design, participants may have been able to select the socially desirable answer. Yet, it was possible that they were still practicing unacceptable behaviors in the classroom. In addition, testing modalities such as scale questions oversimplified culture and provided for participants to stereotype in an attempt to answer in a manner they believed was correct (Nuñez, 2000).

The sample size was relatively small due to some unforeseen difficulties with a proposed School Site 3. In the original research design, one of the five English Schools

Foundation (ESF) high schools had agreed to participate. The school had a long history as an international school in Hong Kong, after opening in the late 1960s. There were approximately 1170 students in attendance, from 33 countries. During the time of the research, the largest population of students were Hong Kong residents of Chinese ethnicity. Students participated in a British-style curriculum with an International Baccalaureate diploma program and English was the language of instruction. In addition, the 74 teaching staff were from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong, with the majority holding British passports. This school site provided a complementary demographic to the other two sites and the school eagerly anticipated participation in the research. Unfortunately, school administration first requested a delay in the survey administration and ultimately a request to withdraw. Scheduling an appropriate time to administer the survey with the least affect on instruction posed a difficulty. However, the largest barrier was internal teacher resistance to participation in cultural competency research without a follow-up action plan by the school administration. Members of the senior teaching staff expressed concerns about the direction the school was heading with multiculturalism. In addition, the school faced a tragedy within the student body just before the survey administration, few parental consent forms were returned and overall enthusiasm for the research waned as the survey date approached. For all these reasons, the third school site was not included in this research study.

Ethical Considerations

The procedure of the present study worked to safe guard participants from experiencing risk through several means. Before the administration of the surveys, the Head of School for each School Site provided a written endorsement for teachers and students to participate. Upon the Institutional Research Board (IRB) granted approval, the researcher provided a short faculty presentation at each school to provide the context of the work and the importance of the research. This allowed for teachers to ask questions in person. Moreover, in working with the lead administrator, the researcher minimized the amount of disruption to participants and classroom instruction. While an invitation was extended to all the teachers and students at each school site, they reserved the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time.

The Parental Consent form was designed specifically for students participating in the Student Engagement Survey. A separate consent form preceded the teachers' Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire. Both included a statement that participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw at any time. In addition, the consent forms incorporated the following sections: purpose of the study, procedures of the study, the benefits of the study, a reassurance of anonymity, and the researcher's contact information for questions, contact information for the researcher's faculty advisor if there are complaints regarding the study.

In working with school communities, anonymity and confidentiality are of the utmost importance. The online surveys were all anonymous and were not time stamped

with user names or IP addresses. Teachers who wished to participate in a prize drawing provided their email addresses for random selection. However, these email addresses were not used for any other purpose. In addition, individual survey results remained confidential. Schools were privy to the results of the study in aggregate, along with a discussion and recommendations for future work.

Chapter Four: Research Results

Experience with several different cultural communities may also provide cognitive and social flexibility and the potential for new syntheses of cultural ways.

(Rogoff, 2003)

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if a relationship exists between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement. This survey research explored perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement, respectively, in two international schools located in Hong Kong during March 2012. The research questions that guided this study are:

1. What are international school teachers' levels of cultural competency, as measured by a modified Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire?
2. Does a relationship exist between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their students' engagement in the international school setting?

The findings are addressed in five sections. The first section describes the context in which the findings are presented. In the second section, a summary of teacher and student demographic profiles are presented. The third section addresses teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency, as measured by the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

(MAQ). In addition, potential correlations with the demographic variables are considered. The fourth section includes an analysis of student engagement as measured by the Student Engagement Survey (SES). The final section explores whether a relationship exists between perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement.

The Context

Three private, international high schools in Hong Kong agreed to participate in this study. However, the findings are based on results from only two of the schools. The third school withdrew from the study in the final week of the survey administration window. School Site 3 did not administer either survey, therefore the sample in this study was composed of teachers and students from School Site 1 and 2. The withdrawal of School Site 3 had an impact on the sample size because the number of student participants fell below 1,000. The implications of the reduced sample size are further discussed in the limitations section.

All teachers who taught at least one high school course were invited to participate in the study by completing the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (Appendix B). Teachers received information regarding the study through a faculty meeting, email communication, and additional follow up by a school administrator. They were given a one-week window to complete the MAQ in March 2012 through Survey Monkey. Of the 81 teachers invited to participate, 70 (81%) MAQ surveys were available for further analysis after removing duplicate or incomplete surveys. The response rate at School Site 1 was relatively high with 21 out of 22 (95%) completed MAQ surveys. Of the 65 high

school teachers at School Site 2, 50 (77%) teachers participated. This represents a convenience sample of 70 teachers with a delimiting factor of teacher self-selection through completion of the online survey.

All high school students in grades nine to twelve at each school were invited to participate by completing the Student Engagement Survey (Appendix C). Parental Consent forms (Appendix D) were distributed to students and they were given two weeks to return the signed forms. Students and parents received reminders through weekly newsletters and email communication. Students had an opportunity to complete the Student Engagement Survey (SES) during class on a single administration date that the school specified. Of the 829 students who were invited to participate between the two international schools, 525 (63%) students returned Parental Consent Forms and were eligible to participate in the SES. A smaller school, School Site 1 had 66 students enrolled in March 2012 and 41 (62%) students completed the SES. Of the 763 students enrolled at School Site 2, 484 (63%) students completed the SES during class. After removing duplicate or incomplete surveys, 520 were available for further analysis, with a delimiting factor of self-selection based on the return of the Parental Consent form. Students who did not participate generally worked on regular class material while the other students completed the survey.

The raw data from the surveys included incomplete and duplicate surveys as well as some missing cell information. Five teacher surveys and five student surveys were incomplete or duplicated, therefore they were removed. In addition, there were a few

missing responses in both the teacher and student surveys. The sample size was large enough for the missing data to be treated as pairwise deletions. The values for these missing cells were calculated using the mean estimates for those particular questions.

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (MAQ)

The Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire measured an aggregate Cultural Competency score through three subconstructs: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude. The teachers' aggregate scores fell into five levels of cultural competency, which are analogous to the six stages of Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity scale and Lindsey's, et al. six levels of Cultural Proficiency (Appendix A). Through internal reliability testing and a confirmatory factor analysis, the MAQ is considered to be both a reasonably reliable and valid instrument in measuring the cultural competency construct.

In addition, Cronbach's alpha assessed whether the data from the three subconstructs form a reliable scale. Table 4.1 summarizes the analysis of each item within the Knowledge, Skills and Attitude subconstructs. The alpha for the Cultural Competency scale and its subconstructs indicate that the items in the MAQ survey form a scale that has reasonable internal consistency reliability ($\alpha > 0.70$).

Table 4.1

Reliability statistics for the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

Cultural Competency Subconstructs	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Knowledge	Q12, Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20	0.843
Skills	Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24, Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q30	0.822
Attitude	Q31, Q32, Q33, Q34, Q35, Q36, Q37	0.712
Cultural Competency	Knowledge, Attitude, Skills subconstructs	0.765

A confirmatory factor analysis assessed the underlying structure for the 26 items of the MAQ. The assumption of independent sampling was met. In addition, the assumptions of normality, linear relationships between pairs of variables, and variables' being correlated at a moderate level were checked. Three factors were requested based on a design that indexed the items within the following cultural competency subconstructs: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude. The first factor, which indexed culturally competent knowledge had high loadings except for question 20. "I know the rules of other languages" had a loading of 0.40 and is below the acceptable value of 0.50. The second factor, which indexed culturally competent skills had high loadings except for questions 22 and 29. "I obtain each student's personal and academic history, considering cultural information" and "I actively support students' wishes, even if they run counter to prevailing educational research" both fell below the 0.50 value at a respective loading of 0.45 and 0.36. Finally, the third factor indexed culturally competent attitudes and had high loadings except for question 36. "I am confident that I can teach students from a culture that is unfamiliar to me" loaded at 0.45 and was below the 0.50 threshold. With

the exclusion of these invalid items, the Cultural Competency construct and its three subconstructs are considered reasonably reliable and internally consistent within acceptable limits.

Student Engagement Survey (SES)

The Student Engagement Survey measured an aggregate Student Engagement score through four subconstructs: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, and Emotional Disaffection. Together, the subconstructs determine students' perceptions of their engagement in the classroom. Considering internal reliability testing and confirmatory factor analysis, the SES is a reasonably reliable and valid instrument in measuring the student engagement construct.

In addition, Cronbach's alpha assessed whether the data from the four subconstructs used to create the Student Engagement score form a reliable scale. The results from the reliability analysis are summarized in Table 4.2. The alpha for the student engagement scale and its subconstructs indicate that the items in the SES form a scale that has reasonable internal consistency reliability ($\alpha > 0.70$).

Table 4.2

Reliability statistics for the Student Engagement Survey

Student Engagement Subconstructs	Items	Cronbach's alpha
Behavioral Engagement	Q10, Q14, Q16, Q18, Q20, Q37	0.804
Behavioral Disaffection	Q13, Q22, Q25, Q26, Q28, Q31, Q34	0.809
Emotional Engagement	Q11, Q15, Q24, Q27, Q29, Q32, Q35, Q36	0.887
Emotional Disaffection	Q12, Q17, Q19, Q21, Q23, Q30, Q33	0.843
Student Engagement	BE, BD, EE, ED	0.856

Note: The subconstructs, Behavioral Disaffection and Emotional Disaffection were reverse coded.

A confirmatory factor analysis assessed the underlying structure for the 28 items of the SES. The assumption of independent sampling was met. In addition, the assumptions of normality, linear relationships between pairs of variables, and variables' being correlated at a moderate level were checked. Four factors were requested based on a design that indexed the items within the following student engagement subconstructs: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Disaffection. It was observed that with one exception, the factor loading of all the construct items was above the threshold value of 0.5. Question 31 from the Behavioral Disaffection index, "In class, I make very little effort to do well" loaded at 0.39 and was below the acceptable threshold. With the exclusion of this invalid item, Student Engagement and its four subconstructs are considered reasonably reliable and internally consistent within acceptable limits.

Demographic Profiles

The two international schools involved in this study are located in Hong Kong. During the 2011-2012 academic school year, the Hong Kong Education Bureau designated 24 institutions as secondary level international schools. The K12 teachers at School Site 1 (SS1) and School Site 2 (SS2) represent over 10 different nationalities. The K12 student body of the two schools exemplify a multicultural, multilingual, and multinational demographic with over 40 nationalities. Most graduates of the two international schools seek a post-secondary education in the United States or Europe.

Description of International School Teachers

This study surveyed 70 teachers employed at two international schools (28.6% from SS1 and 71.4% from SS2) in Hong Kong. The sample is reflective of the demographic composition of teachers at each school. Table 4.3 describes the demographic profiles of School Site 1, School Site 2 and the sample population. Although there are a few differences in distribution of gender, age, nationality, and educational attainment this is a representative sample. Of particular note, a greater proportion of MAQ participants had a Master's degree.

Table 4.3

Demographic profile of teachers in each school site and the MAQ sample

School:	School Site 1		School Site 2		MAQ Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
School staff size	21	-	65	-	81	-
MAQ survey participants	20	95.0	50	77.0	70	81.0
<i>Gender</i>						
Male participants	13	61.9	33	50.7	36	51.4
Female participants	8	38.1	32	49.2	34	48.6
<i>Age</i>						
20-29	1	4.8	3	5.0	2	2.9
30-39	10	47.6	17	26.0	24	34.3
40-49	7	33.3	21	33.0	22	31.4
50-59	3	14.3	14	21.0	15	21.4
60+	0	0	10	15.0	7	10.0
<i>Nationality</i>						
U.S. American	8	38.1	32	49.2	30	42.9
Canadian	3	14.3	8	12.3	13	18.6
UK	4	19.0	4	6.2	8	11.4
Australian	4	19.0	5	7.7	6	8.6
China	1	4.8	3	4.6	2	2.9
Hong Kong	0	0	3	4.6	1	1.4
Dual/Other (may include a combination of the above)	3	14.3	10	15.4	10	14.2
<i>Educational Attainment</i>						
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	10	47.6	26	40.0	22	31.4
Master's degree or equivalent	10	47.6	36	55.4	45	64.3
Doctoral degree or equivalent	1	4.7	3	4.6	3	4.3

The convenience sample consists of 51.4% male teachers and 48.6% female teachers. The age distribution of the teachers indicates that the majority of teachers in this sample were in the following age groups: 30-39 years (34.3%) and 40-49 years (31.4%). The sample of teachers includes 15 nationalities, where 62 report a single nationality and eight report dual nationality. The majority of the teachers indicate an American (42.9%) affiliation, followed by Canadian (18.6%), British (11.4%), Australian (8.6%), and Chinese (2.9%) nationalities. Teachers of Hong Kong, Korean, Spanish and Taiwanese nationalities each represent 1.4% of the sample. Those that report dual nationality with the aforementioned nationalities (11.4%), also claim French, Malaysian, New Zealander and South African nationalities. Furthermore, the highest educational attainment of the teachers indicate that 31.4% hold a Bachelor's degree, 64.3% with a Master's degree and 4.3% possess a Doctoral degree.

Several other important criteria were measured by the MAQ. Table 4.4 describes the following demographics: ethnicities, number of languages fluently spoken, years living overseas, years of international school experience, and number of generations the teacher's family had lived overseas. Within this sample, 11.4% of the teachers designate their ethnicity as *multi-ethnic*. The top three ethnicities reported are European descent (90.1%), East Asian (8.6%) and Southeast Asian (7.1%) groups. Again, teachers were able to choose more than one ethnic group that they identify with. It was also observed that 61.4% of the teachers speak one language fluently, 30.0% of the teachers speak two

languages fluently, 5.7% of the teachers speak three languages fluently and 2.9% of the teachers speak four or more languages fluently.

The teachers also report living overseas for a number of years and several teachers' families have been overseas for more than one generation. In particular, the results indicate that 40% of the teachers have spent 16 or more years living overseas. Further, it was observed that the teachers have 11.63 years of international school teaching experience on average and teaching experience varies between 1 to 31 years. In addition, most of the teachers report moving overseas as an adult (82.9%). A smaller proportion report being raised overseas as a Third Culture Kid (8.6%). Further, a few teachers report that a parent was raised as a TCK (5.9%) and a grandparent grew up as a Third Culture Kid (2.9%).

Table 4.4

Demographic profile of MAQ participants

Demographic Analysis Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage
<i>Ethnicities</i>		
Caucasian	58	82.9
Northeast Asian	6	8.6
Southeast Asian	5	7.1
Other ethnicities	1	1.4
Multi-ethnic (include ethnicities listed above)	8	11.4
<i>Languages fluently spoken</i>		
1	43	61.4
2	21	30.0
3	4	5.7
4+	2	2.9
<i>Years of overseas living experience</i>		
2-5 years	8	11.4
6-10 years	19	27.1
11-15 years	15	21.4
16+ years	28	40.0
<i>Generations overseas</i>		
1 (moved overseas as an adult)	58	82.9
2 (grew up as a TCK)	6	8.6
3 (at least one parent grew up as a TCK)	4	5.7
4 (at least one grandparent grew up as a TCK)	2	2.9

Note: n = 70

The teachers in this sample also represent diverse curriculum areas. Table 4.5 describes the primary subject areas taught by the educators in this sample. The most common subjects include math (14.3%), world languages (14.3%), social studies (12.9%), language arts (11.4%), and science (11.4%). A proportion also report teaching multiple subject areas, which may include Middle School courses (15.7%). The sample consists of a smaller number of physical education, performing arts, visual arts, technology, business/economics, and special education teachers.

Table 4.5

Primary subjects taught by the MAQ teacher participants

	Percentage		Percentage
Language Arts	18.6	Business/Economics	4.3
Social Studies/History	17.1	Special Education	4.3
Math	14.3	Visual Arts	4.3
World Languages	14.3	Technology	2.9
Science	11.4	English	1.4
Humanities	8.6	Journalism	1.4
Physical Education/Health	7.1	Religion	1.4
Counselor	5.7	Theory of Knowledge	1.4
Performing Arts	4.3		

Note: n = 70

Description of International School Students

To explore the relationship between a teacher's cultural competency and their students' engagement, this study also surveyed 520 students currently studying in the two international schools (7.9% from SS1 and 92.1% from SS2). The student sample includes 47.0% male and 53.0% female students. The age distribution of the students indicates that the majority of the students are in the age group of 16-19 years (55.9%) and the remaining students fall in the age group of 13-15 years (44.1%). More than one-third of

the students in the sample represent an American (36.7%) nationality, while the remaining students represent 32 different nationalities. Table 4.6 also summarizes the participating students' top ten nationalities. It is important to note that the admissions practice at SS1 intentionally creates more diversity within the school. SS1 has a greater percentage of European students than SS2: Swedish (5%), Belgian (6%), Swiss (5%).

Table 4.6

Students' demographic profiles in each school and the SES participants

School:	School Site 1		School Site 2		SES Participants	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Student enrollment	66	-	763	-	829	-
SES survey participants	41	62.1	479	62.7	520	62.7
<i>Gender</i>						
Male participants	32	49.0	389	51.0	244	47.0
Female participants	34	52.0	374	49.0	276	53.0
<i>Age</i>						
13-15	30	45.0	379	49.7	291	55.9
16-19	36	55.0	384	50.3	229	44.1
<i>Nationality</i>						
U.S. American	18	27.3	443	58.0	191	36.7
Hong Kong SAR	2	3.0	53	7.0	38	7.4
Canadian	4	6.1	69	9.0	32	6.1
British	4	6.1	53	7.0	28	5.3
Korean	4	6.1	31	4.0	14	2.7
Chinese	0	0	15	2.0	12	2.3
Indian	1	1.5	15	2.0	12	2.3
Australian	2	3.0	23	3.0	10	1.9
Japanese	2	3.0	15	2.0	10	1.9
Singaporean	1	1.5	8	1.0	9	1.8
Dual/Other	28	42.4	38	5.0	164	31.6

Several other important criteria were measured by the SES. Table 4.7 describes the following demographics: ethnicities, number of languages fluently spoken, years living overseas, years of international school experience, and number of generations the teacher's family lived overseas. Within this sample, 20.5% of the students belong to

multi-ethnic groups, while the majority of the remaining students represent European descent (36.1%), Central/Southern Asian (15.0%), East Asian (19.5%) and Southeast Asian (40.6%) ethnicities. Again, students were able to choose more than one ethnic group that they identify with. Of the 20.5% multi-ethnic students, most identify with both European and Asian ethnic groups. It was also observed that 33.8% of the students speak one language fluently, 34.1% of the students speak two languages fluently, 27.7% of the students speak three languages fluently and the remaining 4.4% of students speak four or more languages.

Further, the students report that they have been living overseas for a number of years. Of the students included in this study, 20.6% of the students report that they are from Hong Kong and therefore are not living overseas. Most students report living overseas for five or fewer years. In addition, the surveyed students report 8.75 years of international schooling exposure, on average. The students have a wide range of international schooling experience varying between six months to 16 years. In addition, 44.0% of the students report that they moved overseas with their parents. A proportion of students report that at least one of their parents grew up overseas (14.2%), while a smaller number report that at least one grandparent grew up overseas (11.4%). Anecdotal observations from teachers who administered the survey noted that some students were confused by this question. Therefore, the descriptive statistics for the number of generations students' families lived overseas should be considered with caution.

Table 4.7

Demographic profile of SES participants

Demographic Analysis Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage
<i>Ethnicities</i>		
Caucasian	123	23.7
Central/Southern Asian	59	11.4
Northeast Asian	50	9.7
Southeast Asian	173	33.3
Other ethnicities	166	31.9
Multi-ethnic (includes ethnicities listed above)	107	20.5
<i>Languages fluently spoken</i>		
1	176	33.8
2	177	34.1
3	141	27.7
4+	23	4.4
<i>Years of overseas living experience</i>		
0-1 years	184	35.4
2-5 years	120	23.0
6-10 years	79	15.1
11-15 years	89	17.2
16+ years	48	9.2
<i>Generations overseas</i>		
1 (moved overseas with parents)	230	44.0
2 (at least one parent grew up as a TCK)	74	14.2
3 (at least one grandparent grew up as a TCK)	60	11.4

Note: Students reporting 0-1 years of overseas living experience also include students who hold a Hong Kong passport. These 38 students report "0" because they are not living overseas. n = 520

Distinctions Between the Teacher and Student Profiles

When examining the characteristics of teacher and student samples, there are a number of striking features that are distinct to international schools. Clearly, both samples are multicultural, multilingual, multinational, with many years of overseas experience. Both teachers and students report primarily Western affiliations with a mean tenure overseas of 8.75 or more years. Yet, it is also important to note that the student sample is considerably more ethnically and linguistically diverse than the teacher sample. In

contrasting the ethnicities of the two groups, the teachers do not reflect the diverse ethnic mosaic of the students. Most teachers were of European descent (90.1%) with a much smaller proportion of East Asians (8.6%) and Southeast Asians (7.1%). Yet, the largest student ethnic group is Southeast Asian (40.6%) followed by European descent (36.1%), East Asian (19.5%), and Central/South Asian (15.0%). In addition, the student sample had twice as many multi-ethnic individuals (20.5%) than the teacher sample (11.4%). A similar pattern emerges when comparing the number of languages spoken. The student body is much more multilingual with 66.2% fluent in two or more languages. This contrasts with the teachers, where 38.6% are fluent in two or more languages.

Teacher Cultural Competency Findings

Research question one requires a descriptive examination of teachers' cultural competency based on their perception through the MAQ survey. Moreover, students' perceptions of their teachers' cultural competency were analyzed based on the cultural competency portion of the SES. The subsequent section provides descriptive statistics for the teachers' Cultural Competency scores, along with the three subconstructs (Knowledge, Skills, Attitude) and student perception of their teachers' levels of cultural competency.

The null hypothesis for research question two states there is no relationship between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency. This question requires an analysis of the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency and years of international

teaching experience. In addition, the results of the parametric correlational analyses for teacher cultural competency and the demographic analysis variables are presented in this section.

Teachers' Self-Perception of Cultural Competency

The Cultural Competency score for the surveyed teachers was based on five levels of cultural competency (Culhane-Pera, 1997). The results are summarized in Table 4.8, where teachers assessed themselves at levels three through five of the continuum. The bulk of the teachers indicated that they are at the Cultural Competence level (58.6%) with a smaller proportion at the Cultural Precompetence and Cultural Proficiency levels. In addition, it was observed that none of the teachers assessed themselves at the Cultural Incapacity or Cultural Blindness levels. This means that the teachers perceived themselves to be in the ethnorelative stages of cultural competency development. Rather than viewing the world from a self-centered perspective, their global view takes into account cultural difference. At the Cultural Proficiency level, nearly a quarter of the teachers also believed that they fully integrate cultural competences into their instructional practice.

Table 4.8

Distribution of teachers' based on their cultural competency scores

Cultural Competency Levels	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Level 1: Cultural Incapacity	0	-
Level 2: Cultural Blindness	0	-
Level 3: Cultural Precompetence	12	17.1
Level 4: Cultural Competence	41	58.6
Level 5: Cultural Proficiency	17	24.3

Note: n = 70

Looking further into the cultural competency findings, the descriptive statistics for the MAQ subconstructs are summarized in Table 4.9. On average teachers had a Cultural Competency score of 89.5, with a minimum of 57 and a maximum of 108. The Knowledge, Skills and Attitude subconstructs were relatively evenly distributed. The teachers reported a greater range of scores in the Knowledge and Skills subconstructs than for Attitude. However, the means were also slightly elevated for Knowledge and Skills. In addition, it can be observed that the standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis for all the constructs are within acceptable limits and we can assume that the constructs do not deviate significantly from the normal distribution.

Table 4.9

Descriptive statistics for cultural competency and its subconstructs

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Cultural Competency	57	108	89.49	11.43	-0.80	0.07
Knowledge Subconstruct	14	39	31.19	5.51	-1.14	1.00
Skills Subconstruct	16	39	30.87	5.36	-0.89	0.65
Attitude Subconstruct	22	30	27.43	2.22	-0.66	-0.50

Note: n =70

Another important aspect of the cultural competency descriptive statistics involves an examination of the two schools. Table 4.10 compares teachers' cultural competency and the scale scores on the subconstructs for School Site 1 and 2. The results indicate that teachers from School Site 2 had higher mean scores for cultural competency and its subconstructs compared to the teachers from School Site 1. However, the t-test results show that the differences in the average scores of teachers from the two schools

are statistically insignificant at $t(df=25)=-1.648$, $p=0.056$. In other words, the teachers from School Site 1 and School Site 2 score equally in cultural competency and its subconstructs.

Table 4.10

Cultural competency in the two school sites

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test
Cultural Competency	School 1	20	85.20	14.55	$t(df=25) = -1.648$, $p=0.056$
	School 2	50	91.20	9.56	
Knowledge Subconstruct	School 1	20	29.15	7.19	$t(df=27) = -1.521$, $p=0.089$
	School 2	50	32.00	4.50	
Skills Subconstruct	School 1	20	29.10	6.68	$t(df=68) = -1.141$, $p=0.1289$
	School 2	50	31.58	4.63	
Attitude Subconstruct	School 1	20	26.95	2.39	$t(df=26) = -1.703$, $p=0.350$
	School 2	50	27.62	2.15	

Note: $*p<0.05$; $n = 70$

Cultural Competency and Years of International School Experience

Of particular interest in this study was the relationship between international school teachers' years of overseas experience and their perceived level of cultural competency. The results in Table 4.11 summarize the average years of international teaching experience across different cultural competency levels. On average teachers at the Cultural Proficiency level had the most overseas teaching experience ($M= 14.41$, $SD=6.75$). In addition, teachers at the Cultural Precompetence level had the least overseas teaching experience ($M=10.95$, $SD=7.19$). This points to a possible positive relationship between the number of years a teacher spent in international schools and their self-reported cultural competency level. However, the F-test results indicate that the difference in the teaching experience across different levels of cultural competency is

statistically insignificant, $F(2, 67) = 1.655$, $p = 0.105$. The null hypothesis for research question two was, “There is no relationship between international school teachers’ years of overseas instructional experience and their level of cultural competency.” Before confirming the null hypothesis, inferential statistics were performed with the four cultural competency subconstructs across years of international teaching experience.

Table 4.11

International teaching experience across different cultural competency levels

	Level 1 Cultural Incapacity	Level 2 Cultural Blindness	Level 3 Cultural Precompetence	Level 4 Cultural Competence	Level 5 Cultural Proficiency	ANOVA test
N	-	-	12	41	17	
Mean	-	-	10.00	10.95	14.41	$F(2,67)$ $=1.655$, $p=0.105$
Std. Deviation	-	-	7.19	7.73	6.75	
Std. Error	-	-	2.08	1.21	1.64	

Note: $*p < 0.05$; $n = 70$

Since the teachers in this study perceived themselves to be in the ethnorelative stages of the cultural competency continuum, the analysis delved further into the cultural competency subconstructs: Knowledge, Skills, Attitude. The teachers’ summary scores, based on their international teaching experience, across the three different MAQ subconstructs is presented in Table 4.12. Here, it can be observed that the average score for teachers with more international teaching experience is higher than the average score for those with less international teaching experience, across all the MAQ constructs. Yet again, the F-test results indicate that the difference in the mean scores for Attitude, Knowledge, Skills, and the Cultural Competency score is statistically insignificant across

groups. Therefore, teachers with more international teaching experience score the same as teachers with less international teaching experience on all MAQ subconstructs in this sample. The null hypothesis for research question two is tentatively accepted but it would be worth further exploration with a larger sample size and across different international school settings.

Table 4.12

Analysis of variance for MAQ construct scores for teachers and international teaching experience

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	ANOVA Test
Cultural Competency Score	2-5 years	8	3.95	0.49	0.17	F (3,66) = 0.681, p=0.567
	6-10 years	19	4.07	0.41	0.09	
	11-15 years	15	4.07	0.60	0.15	
	16 or more years	28	4.20	0.51	0.10	
Attitude Subconstruct	2-5 years	8	4.60	0.32	0.11	F (3,66) = 0.769, p=0.516
	6-10 years	19	4.46	0.40	0.09	
	11-15 years	15	4.64	0.33	0.09	
	16 or more years	28	4.60	0.38	0.07	
Knowledge Subconstruct	2-5 years	8	3.50	0.96	0.34	F (3,66) = 1.675, p=0.181
	6-10 years	19	3.86	0.54	0.12	
	11-15 years	15	3.83	0.78	0.20	
	16 or more years	28	4.08	0.61	0.12	
Skills Subconstruct	2-5 years	8	3.73	0.47	0.16	F (3,66) = 0.403, p=0.751
	6-10 years	19	3.89	0.50	0.11	
	11-15 years	15	3.73	0.80	0.21	
	16 or more years	28	3.94	0.76	0.14	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; $n = 70$

Before conducting a regression analysis of teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency and student engagement, a correlational analysis determined whether the teachers' demographic variables held a relationship with cultural competency scores. Due to the smaller sample size ($n=70$), ethnicities, nationalities and generations overseas were

grouped. T-tests revealed that the difference across cultural competency and gender, was statistically insignificant at $t(df=68)=-1.842$, $p=0.070$. Similarly, the difference across cultural competency and grouped ethnicity (Caucasian and People of Color), was statistically insignificant at $t(df=68)=-0.533$, $p=0.2979$. The results of ANOVA tests for age, nationality, the number of years living overseas, and subject area taught also showed statistically insignificant relationships.

However, educational attainment, number of languages spoken and generations that their family had lived overseas revealed evidence of a relationship with teachers' perceived cultural competency. To further explore the relationships, correlational tests were conducted to determine whether the Knowledge, Skills or Attitude subconstructs were the source of significance.

The average Cultural Competency score for teachers, based on their level of education, for the three subconstructs is presented in Table 4.13. The Cultural Competency, Knowledge and Skills scores for teachers with a Masters degree or above is higher than the average score for teachers with a Bachelors degree. In addition, the Knowledge and Skills subconstructs between the groups is statistically significant. When looking at cultural competency between groups, the t-test results indicate that the difference in the mean score is statistically significant, $t(df=68)=-2.714$, $p=0.008$. Teachers with a graduate degree perceived themselves to be more culturally competent on the Knowledge and Skills subconstructs. However, the difference across educational attainment and Attitude is insignificant, $t(df=68)=-1.212$, $p=0.230$. Thus, there is an

association between a teacher's educational level and their cultural competency score with a special emphasis on culturally competent Knowledge and Skills.

Table 4.13

Analysis of variance for teachers' MAQ construct scores based on level of their education

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test
Cultural Competency Score	Bachelors	22	3.88	0.52	0.11	t (df=68) = -2.714, p=0.008*
	Masters and Above	48	4.21	0.46	0.07	
Attitude Subconstruct	Bachelors	22	4.49	0.39	0.08	t (df=68) = -1.212, p=0.230
	Masters and Above	48	4.61	0.36	0.05	
Knowledge Subconstruct	Bachelors	22	3.61	0.60	0.13	t (df=68) = -2.476, p=0.016*
	Masters and Above	48	4.03	0.69	0.10	
Skills Subconstruct	Bachelors	22	3.54	0.75	0.16	t (df=68) = -2.829, p=0.006*
	Masters and Above	48	4.01	0.58	0.08	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; $n = 70$

Teachers' scores based on the number of languages they speak fluently across the three MAQ subconstructs is presented in Table 4.14. The mean score of teachers for the Knowledge subconstruct increases with the number of languages they speak. Moreover, the F-test results indicate that the difference in the mean score for the Knowledge construct among the different groups is statistically significant at, $Welch (3,10) = 5.865, p = 0.015$. However, there is no significant difference in the average score of teachers on the Cultural Competency, Attitude or Skills scores. These findings indicate that teachers who can speak more languages perceived themselves to be more culturally competent on the Knowledge subconstruct.

Table 4.14

Analysis of variance for teachers' MAQ construct scores based on languages spoken fluently

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	ANOVA Test
Cultural Competency Score	One Language	43	4.01	0.54	0.08	F (3,66) = 2.580, p=0.061
	Two Languages	21	4.19	0.38	0.08	
	Three Languages	4	4.57	0.42	0.21	
	Four Languages	2	4.56	0.22	0.15	
Attitude Subconstruct	One Language	43	4.49	0.38	0.06	F (3,66) = 2.700, p=0.053
	Two Languages	21	4.65	0.33	0.07	
	Three Languages	4	4.88	0.16	0.08	
	Four Languages	2	4.92	0.12	0.08	
Knowledge Subconstruct	One Language	43	3.81	0.77	0.12	Welch (3,10) = 5.865, p=0.015*
	Two Languages	21	3.93	0.51	0.11	
	Three Languages	4	4.41	0.41	0.21	
	Four Languages	2	4.31	0.09	0.06	
Skills Subconstruct	One Language	43	3.72	0.68	0.10	F (3,66) = 2.401, p=0.076
	Two Languages	21	3.97	0.59	0.13	
	Three Languages	4	4.44	0.72	0.36	
	Four Languages	2	4.44	0.44	0.31	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; $n = 70$

A post-hoc Sheffe's test was conducted to further explore the relationship between the Knowledge subconstruct and the number of languages fluently spoken. The Sheffe's test indicates a significant difference between the Knowledge subconstruct of teachers who can speak four languages fluently and those that only speak one language fluently at $p=0.009$. The test results also indicate a weak but insignificant difference between the Knowledge subconstruct of teachers who speak two languages fluently and those that speak four languages at $p=0.053$. However, there is no association between the Knowledge subconstruct of teachers who speak three and four languages fluently.

The average score for teachers, based on the number of generations their family had lived overseas, across the MAQ subconstructs is presented in Table 4.15. The mean score in the Attitude subconstruct is higher for teachers who had lived overseas for the past two to three generations. Moreover, the t-test results indicate that the difference in the mean score for the Attitude subconstruct between the groups is statistically significant, $t(df=68)=-2.333$, $p=0.023$. However, there is no significant difference in the mean score for teachers within the Skills, Knowledge, and overall Cultural Competency scores. These findings indicate that teachers who spend more than two generations living overseas perceive themselves to be more competent on the Attitude subconstruct.

Table 4.15

Analysis of variance for teachers' MAQ construct scores based on generations lived overseas

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test
Cultural Competency Score	Moved overseas as an adult	58	4.06	0.51	0.07	$t(df=68) = -1.838$, $p=0.070$
	Parents, Grandparents, Great grand parents moved overseas	12	4.35	0.39	0.11	
Attitude Subconstruct	Moved overseas as an adult	58	4.53	0.38	0.05	$t(df=68) = -2.333$, $p=0.023^*$
	Parents, Grandparents, Great grand parents moved overseas	12	4.79	0.25	0.07	
Knowledge Subconstruct	Moved overseas as an adult	58	3.87	0.72	0.09	$t(df=68) = -0.849$, $p=0.399$
	Parents, Grandparents, Great grand parents moved overseas	12	4.05	0.54	0.16	
Skills Construct	Moved overseas as an adult	58	3.79	0.67	0.09	$t(df=68) = -1.963$, $p=0.054$
	Parents, Grandparents, Great grand parents moved overseas	12	4.20	0.56	0.16	

Note: $*p<0.05$; $n = 70$

The teachers in this study believe that they are in the ethnorelative stages of cultural competency. Specifically, they are at the Cultural Precompetence, Cultural Competence and Cultural Proficiency levels. In exploring this further, the results reveal that teachers perceive themselves to be relatively stronger in the Attitude subconstruct, followed by the Skills and then the Knowledge subconstructs. However there was no significant difference in the means between the subconstruct scores. The findings also provide evidence that a teacher's years of international school experience do not result in different levels of cultural competency. However, there is a positive relationship between a teacher's educational attainment and their cultural competency. Further, a positive correlation exists between the number of languages spoken and a teacher's Knowledge score. Finally, the number of generations a teacher's family had lived overseas and Attitude score demonstrates a positive relationship. These findings are worth additional exploration in follow-up studies.

Students' Perceptions of their Teachers' Cultural Competency

To obtain a complete picture of teacher cultural competency, the students' perceptions were examined. The results are summarized in Table 4.16 and indicate that 54.3% of the students perceived that their teachers' were at the highest level, Cultural Proficiency. On the contrary, only a few students (0.6%) perceived that their teachers were at the Cultural Blindness level. Moreover, none of the students believed that their teachers operate at a Cultural Incapacity level. This coincides with the teachers'

perceptions of their own competency because all teachers scored in the ethnorelative stage on the cultural competency continuum.

Table 4.16

Teachers' cultural competency level based on students' perception

Level of Cultural Competency	Percentage
Cultural Incapacity (Level 1)	-
Cultural Blindness (Level 2)	0.64
Cultural Precompetence (Level 3)	14.70
Cultural Competence (Level 4)	30.37
Cultural Proficiency (Level 5)	54.28

Note: n = 520 students, reporting on 43 teachers

A correlational analysis determined whether the teachers' demographic variables held a relationship with cultural competency scores as perceived by students. Due to the smaller sample size (n=43), ethnicities, nationalities and generations overseas were grouped. Table 4.17 shows the results of the t-tests. Particular groups within each of the teacher demographic variables had elevated average cultural competency scores based on student perception. These include: female teachers, younger teachers (20-29 years), those with graduate degrees, teachers who speak one language fluently, have more overseas living experience and who have lived overseas for two or more generations maintain a higher average cultural competency score. However, the ANOVA tests revealed that none of the teacher demographic variables are significantly associated with students' perceptions of teacher cultural competency.

Table 4.17

Analysis of variance for teachers' levels of cultural competency (student perception) based on teacher demographic variables

Teacher Demographic Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	ANOVA (t and F tests)
Gender	Male	20	21.97	1.30	0.29	t (df=41) = -0.288, p=0.608
	Female	23	22.09	1.36	0.28	
Age Groups	20-39 years	15	22.28	1.25	0.32	F (2,40) = 0.441, p=0.647
	40-49 years	13	21.81	1.24	0.34	
	50 years or older	15	21.99	1.49	0.39	
Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	14	21.89	1.60	0.43	t (df=41) = -0.516, p=0.608
	Master's Degree and Above	29	22.11	1.19	0.22	
Languages Spoken Fluently	One Language	26	22.19	1.36	0.27	t (df=41) = 0.945, p=0.350
	Two or More Languages	17	21.80	1.26	0.30	
Years Overseas Living Experience	0-10 Years	13	22.59	0.99	0.28	F (2,40) = 1.687, p=0.198
	11-15 Years	10	21.76	1.17	0.37	
	16+ Years	20	21.82	1.51	0.34	
Generations Overseas	1 (moved overseas with parents)	36	21.98	1.28	0.21	t (df=41) = -0.654, p=0.517
	2+ (at least one parent or grandparent grew up as a TCK)	7	22.34	1.59	0.60	

Note: * $p < 0.05$; $n = 520$ students, reporting on 43 teachers

The following cross-tabulation of the students' perceptions of their teachers' cultural competency and teachers' perception about their own cultural competency is summarized in Table 4.18. The majority of the teachers rated their own Cultural Competency between Cultural Precompetence (Level 3) and Cultural Proficiency (Level 5). On the other hand, the students placed most of their teachers in either Cultural Competence (Level 4) or Cultural Proficiency (Level 5). A very small proportion of students rated their teachers at the Cultural Precompetence (Level 3) and Cultural Blindness (Level 2). Further, some teachers rated themselves higher on the cultural

competency scale, while their students rated them on the lower end of the cultural competency scale. Similarly, it appears that teachers who rate themselves lower on the cultural competency scale are also rated higher by the students. Since there appears to be a difference between the expected and the observed results, a chi-square test was performed. The chi-square test results indicate that there is a significant relationship between teacher cultural competency as perceived by students and teachers, $\chi^2 (df=12) = 49.018, p = 0.000$. In other words, it is very likely that factors other than chance account for the difference in student and teacher reports. This finding is worthy of future exploration in a later study.

Table 4.18

Cross-tabulation showing students' perception of their teachers' cultural competency and teachers' perception of their own cultural competency

		Students' perception of their teachers' Cultural Competency			
		Cultural Blindness	Cultural Precompetence	Cultural Competence	Cultural Proficiency
Teachers' perception of their own Cultural Competency	Cultural Incapacity	0.00%	27.30%	45.50%	27.30%
	Cultural Blindness	0.70%	18.30%	31.20%	49.80%
	Cultural Precompetence	0.00%	7.60%	25.70%	66.70%
	Cultural Competence	0.70%	14.90%	28.40%	56.00%
	Cultural Proficiency	1.40%	8.10%	35.10%	55.40%

Overall, both the teachers and students rated teacher cultural competency in the ethnorelative stages of the continuum. The students perceived their teachers to have a

high level of cultural competency and related that most teachers are at either the Cultural Competence or Cultural Proficiency levels. While the teachers also rated themselves in the upper half of the cultural competency continuum, most perceived themselves to be at the Cultural Competence level. However, the findings reveal that there is no linear relationship between teacher and student perception of a teacher's cultural competency.

Student Engagement Findings

This section explores the results of the Student Engagement Survey (SES). Students' self-perceptions about their engagement are summarized in Table 4.19. The results indicate that more than half of the students believe that they are usually engaged in their classes. Similarly, 26.8% of the students' reported that they are always engaged in their classes. On the contrary, a small number of students (1.0%) agreed that they are never engaged in their classes.

Table 4.19

Students' self-perception about their engagement

	Frequency (n)	Percentage
I am never engaged in this class	5	1.00
I am sometimes engaged in this class	100	19.20
I am usually engaged in this class	276	53.00
I am always engaged in this class	139	26.80

Note: n = 520

An additional synopsis of the student engagement descriptive statistics and its subconstructs are presented in Table 4.20. The mean Student Engagement score for the students was 91.2, with a minimum score of 29 and a maximum score of 122. Similarly,

the mean score for the Behavioral Engagement subconstruct is 25, the Behavioral Disaffection subconstruct is 14.7, the Emotional Engagement subconstruct is 31.7 and the Emotional Disaffection subconstruct is 19.8. In addition, it can be observed that the standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis for all the constructs are within acceptable limits and it is assumed that the constructs do not deviate significantly from the normal distribution.

Table 4.20

Descriptive statistics for student engagement and its subconstructs

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Student Engagement	29	122	91.17	18.76	-0.60	0.02
Behavioral Engagement	7	30	25.00	4.02	-1.18	1.72
Behavioral Disaffection	0	24	14.70	5.62	-0.47	-0.36
Emotional Engagement	8	40	31.72	6.38	-0.82	0.49
Emotional Disaffection	0	28	19.75	6.13	-0.73	-0.06

Note: n =520; reverse coding for Behavioral Disaffection and Emotional Disaffection

The descriptive statistics comparing students' engagement and scores on the different subconstructs at the two school sites is summarized in Table 4.21. The results indicate that students from School Site 2 had higher mean scores for Student Engagement and its subconstructs compared to the students from School Site 1. Moreover, the t-test results indicate that the differences in average scores for students from the two schools are statistically significant, $t(df=617) = -3.408$, $p=0.001$. These results show that students from School Site 2 self-reported higher engagement than the students from School Site 1.

Table 4.21

Students' engagement in School Site 1 and School Site 2

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test
Student Engagement	School 1	41	81.61	21.91	$t(df=518) = -3.408$, $p=0.001$
	School 2	479	91.86	18.34	
Behavioral Engagement	School 1	41	24.32	4.98	$t(df=518) = -1.120$, $p=0.263$
	School 2	479	25.05	3.94	
Behavioral Disaffection	School 1	41	12.39	6.62	$t(df=518) = -2.741$, $p=0.006$
	School 2	479	14.87	5.50	
Emotional Engagement	School 1	41	28.53	7.97	$t(df=44) = -2.686$, $p=0.001$
	School 2	479	31.95	6.19	
Emotional Disaffection	School 1	41	16.37	5.73	$t(df=518) = -3.701$, $p=0.000$
	School 2	479	19.99	6.08	

Note: $*p<0.05$; $n=520$; reverse coding for Behavioral Disaffection and Emotional Disaffection

Before conducting a regression analysis of teacher cultural competency and student engagement, a correlational analysis determined whether the students' demographic analysis variables held a relationship with student engagement. Due to the smaller frequencies in some ethnic and nationality groups, they were regrouped. Student ages were also grouped into two categories: 13-15 years of age and 16-19 years of age. T-tests revealed that the difference across student engagement and gender, is statistically insignificant at $t(df=617) = -0.108$, $p=0.914$. The results of ANOVA tests for ethnicity, nationality, the number of years overseas, number of languages spoken and number of generations the student's family had lived overseas also showed statistically insignificant relationships.

One student demographic variable did show a correlation with student engagement. The descriptive statistics comparing the average score of students' overall engagement and four different subconstructs is summarized in Table 4.22. The results

indicate that students in the 16-19 years of age group have higher Behavioral Engagement and Behavioral Disaffection scores, as measured by the SES. This is in contrast to the students in 13-15 year group. Moreover, the t-test results indicate that the differences in the overall subconstruct scores are statistically significant. Across age groups, there is a statistically significant positive correlation to Behavioral Engagement at $t(df=615) = 2.478$, $p=0.016$. Behavioral Disaffection also has a statistically significant correlation at $t(df=617) = 2.803$, $p=0.005$. However, there is no significant difference in the scores of the students in Emotional Engagement, Emotional Disaffection and overall Student Engagement score.

Table 4.22

Comparison of students' engagement among different age groups

	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	T-test
Students' Engagement	13-15 years	228	105.13	17.32	1.05	$t(df=511) = 1.146$, $p=0.260$
	16-19 years	292	103.42	19.81	1.06	
Behavioral Engagement	13-15 years	228	25.44	3.59	0.22	$t(df=516) = 2.478$, $p=0.016^*$
	16-19 years	292	24.65	4.31	0.23	
Behavioral Disaffection	13-15 years	228	21.41	5.25	0.32	$t(df=518) = 2.803$, $p=0.005^*$
	16-19 years	292	20.14	5.83	0.31	
Emotional Engagement	13-15 years	228	31.58	5.87	0.36	$t(df=511) = -0.508$, $p=0.618$
	16-19 years	292	31.84	6.76	0.36	
Emotional Disaffection	13-15 years	228	26.71	5.94	0.36	$t(df=518) = -0.169$, $p=0.866$
	16-19 years	292	26.79	6.27	0.34	

Note: $*p<0.05$; $n = 520$; reverse coding for Behavioral Disaffection and Emotional Disaffection

Generally, the students found themselves to be engaged in their teacher's class.

Of the demographic controls, the only variable that produced a relationship with student

engagement was age. As students increased in age, their Behavioral Engagement also increased to produce a positive correlation.

Teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement Findings

While the literature suggests that student engagement should increase along with higher cultural competency, academic research had yet to confirm this assumption. Within this study, research question three poses, “What is the relationship between teachers’ cultural competency and their students’ engagement in the international school setting?” The null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between teacher cultural competency and their students’ engagement. To explore this question, an analysis of student engagement across teacher cultural competency was required.

Cronbach’s alpha assessed the association between teachers’ self-reported cultural competency and students’ self-reported engagement in their teacher’s class. Table 4.23 summarizes the results. The alpha and 2-tailed significance indicate that Student Engagement does not hold a relationship with teachers’ perceptions of their cultural competency.

Table 4.23

Correlation for teachers’ perceptions of cultural competency across student engagement constructs

	Student Engagement	Behavioral Engagement	Behavioral Disaffection	Emotional Engagement	Emotional Disaffection
Pearson Correlation	0.092	-0.030	-0.034	0.128	0.204
Significance (2-tailed)	0.557	0.846	0.829	0.413	0.189

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), n = 43

To confirm this finding, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if teachers' culturally competent Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude are associated with Student Engagement scores. As displayed in Table 4.24, this combination of variables did not show a significant relationship with student engagement, $f(df=3,39) = 0.598$, $p>0.05$. When examining teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency, the null hypothesis was accepted because both the Pearson's correlation and analysis of variance resulted in statistically insignificant relationships.

Table 4.24

Analysis of variance of student engagement and three teacher cultural competency subconstructs

Cultural Competency	F	Significance
Between Groups	0.60	0.62
Knowledge Subconstruct	-0.908	0.369
Skills Subconstruct	0.634	0.530
Attitude Subconstruct	0.712	0.480

*Note: * $p<0.05$; response variable is student engagement; $n = 43$*

However, there was a significant positive association between teachers' cultural competency and students' engagement, as perceived by the students. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the association between students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency and their own engagement in the class. Table 4.25 summarizes the results. The alpha for Student Engagement was 0.408, which indicates a positive correlation. In addition, the relationship is considered to be significant at the more conservative $p<0.01$ level. The four subconstructs also indicate that each of these

variables hold a strong relationship with students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency.

Table 4.25

Correlation for students' perceptions of teacher cultural competency across student engagement constructs

	Student Engagement	Behavioral Engagement	Behavioral Disaffection	Emotional Engagement	Emotional Disaffection
Pearson Correlation	0.408	0.294	0.296	0.448	0.318
Significance (2-tailed)	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**	0.000**

*Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed); $n = 43$*

A linear regression was performed with Student Engagement as the response variable and Cultural Competency (as perceived by students) as the explanatory variable and controlling for gender, overseas experience, international teaching experience, age, and generations overseas. The F-test results indicate that the Cultural Competency (students' perception), after controlling for the teacher demographic variables, is statistically significant in explaining the variation in the Student Engagement, $F(1, 41) = 17.627, p < 0.05$. The regression coefficients in Table 4.26 indicate that there is a significant and positive association between students' perception of teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement.

Table 4.26

Summary of regression coefficients predicting student engagement from teacher cultural competency (as perceived by students) controlling for teacher demographic variables

Variables	Coefficients	t	Significance
Constant	3.424	0.122	0.903
Cultural Competency (students' perception)	3.698	3.235	0.003**
Gender	0.807	0.272	0.787
Age	-0.890	-0.531	0.599
Overseas Living Experience	0.671	0.301	0.765
International Teaching Experience	0.009	0.032	0.975
Educational Attainment	2.756	1.106	0.277
Languages Spoken Fluently	-1.246	-0.529	0.600
Generations Overseas	1.488	0.600	0.552

*Note: ** $p < 0.01$; $n = 520$*

In addition, a linear regression was performed with Student Engagement as the response variable and Cultural Competency (as perceived by students) as the explanatory variable and controlling student demographic variables. The F-test results indicate that the Cultural Competency (students' perception), after controlling for the student demographic variables, is statistically significant in explaining the variation in the Student Engagement, $F(7, 512) = 19.360, p < 0.05$. The regression coefficients in Table 4.27 indicate that there is a significant and positive association between students' perception of teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement. The results also show that students' gender, age, overseas living experience, international schooling experience, generations overseas and languages fluently spoken do not have a significant association on students' engagement.

Table 4.27

Summary of regression coefficients predicting student engagement from teacher cultural competency (as perceived by students) controlling for student demographic variables

Variables	Coefficients	t	Significance
Constant	69.020	6.944	0.000
Cultural Competency (Students' perception)	2.380	11.200	0.000**
Gender	-0.735	-0.521	0.602
Age	-0.948	-1.700	0.090
Overseas Living Experience	-0.344	-0.577	0.564
International Schooling Experience	-0.084	-0.445	0.656
Languages Spoken Fluently	0.184	0.212	0.832
Generations Overseas	0.222	0.349	0.727

Note: ** $p < 0.01$; $n = 520$

As Cultural Competency (student perception) scores increase, Student Engagement scores increase by 3.698, maintaining for all the other variables. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that none of the teacher or student demographic variables have a significant influence on student perception of teacher cultural competency. While the null hypothesis for research question three was accepted when examining teacher self-reports of cultural competency, examining teacher cultural competency as perceived by students produces a different result. The null hypothesis may be tentatively rejected when student perception is taken into account. The more culturally competent students perceive their teacher to be, the higher their engagement across all subconstructs.

Conclusion

This research establishes that international school teachers and students perceive teacher cultural competency to be in the ethnorelative domain. When considering students' perspectives, they reported that nearly all of their teachers operate from an ethnorelative world view. Moreover, students placed most of their teachers in the Cultural

Competence and Cultural Proficiency levels. On the other hand, the teacher self-reports indicated that they believe themselves to be slightly lower, predominately operating at the Cultural Competence level.

This is consistent with previous intercultural sensitivity research conducted in Hong Kong government and international schools (Westrick & Yuen, 2007). There, the researchers used the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to determine the intercultural sensitivity levels within a similar international school sample. They concluded that most international school teachers are in the Acceptance stage of the continuum. This is essentially one level lower than the findings in this study. Without the results from a Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire in the educational field, it is not possible to determine whether this level is relatively high for international school teachers.

The quantitative data revealed that three demographic variables have a statistically significant relationship with teachers' perceptions of their cultural competency and its subconstructs: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude. While the amount of overseas instructional experience did not have a positive association with perceptions of teacher cultural competency, educational attainment, the number of languages spoken fluently and the generations a teacher had lived overseas did. First, the achievement of a graduate degree is positively associated with perceptions of teacher cultural competency. In particular, culturally competent Knowledge and Skills scores increased along with educational attainment. Second, the more languages a teacher spoke fluently, the higher

their culturally competent Knowledge. Third, as teachers lived overseas for increased numbers of generations, their Attitude score also increased. Moreover, the findings revealed that students' ages had a statistically significant relationship with Student Engagement. The older students reported higher Behavioral Engagement than their younger counterparts. The causal agents for these relationships were not identified.

The results of this study also conveyed an interesting relationship between perceptions of teacher cultural competency and student engagement. The teachers' self-reported cultural competency did not bear a statistically significant relationship with student engagement or any of the subconstructs. However, students' perceptions of teacher cultural competence and student engagement revealed a very strong, positive relationship. This relationship was seen across all four subconstructs of student engagement and was not influenced by any of the demographic variables. Again, the causal agents were not identified.

Chapter Five: Discussion

Teachers carry into the classroom their personal cultural background. They perceive students, all of whom are cultural agents, with inevitable prejudice and preconception. Students likewise come to school with personal cultural backgrounds that influence their perceptions of teachers, other students, and the school itself. Together students and teachers construct, mostly without being conscious of doing it, an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance.

(Spindler & Spindler, 1994)

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore whether there is a relationship between teacher cultural competency and their students' engagement within international schools in Hong Kong. The population of international school students, often referred to as Third Culture Kids, represents a culturally diverse demographic with upwards of 40 nationalities. Consequently, international school teachers support students with varied life experiences, beliefs, values, communication styles, family attitudes towards schooling, academic expectation, and other cultural norms.

Three research questions guided this study. The analysis began by investigating international school teachers' levels of cultural competency. Along with exploring the characteristics of teacher's self-reported cultural competency, the study looked at whether a relationship exists between international school teachers' years of overseas instructional experience and their level of competency. Finally, the study examined whether a

relationship exists between teacher cultural competency and their students' engagement. Throughout, the demographic analysis variables were explored to identify their association with cultural competency and student engagement.

The Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (MAQ) was used to measure teachers' perceptions of their own Cultural Competency along three subconstructs: Knowledge, Skills and Attitude. The MAQ also established a quantified measure of cultural competency. In addition, the Student Engagement Survey (SES) measured students' perceptions of their engagement along four subconstructs: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Disaffection. The SES also measured each student's perception of their teacher's cultural competency. As a result, the SES provided a quantified measure of student engagement and teacher cultural competency (student perception).

The discussion of this research is presented in four sections. The first section provides a summary of the findings. In the second section, the implications of the study are analyzed according to theory, research and practice. The third section addresses limitations of the study. The final section describes several areas for further research.

Summary of the Findings

Several findings emerged from this study as a result of a thorough investigation of the research questions and supplementary analyses. None of the findings suggest causality, as the primary focus of the research was to investigate relationships between variables. Given the nature of the convenience sample used in this quantitative study, the

conclusions presented here should be generalized with caution. The following section describes the results of the study, along with connections to the literature and research.

International school teachers typically function from an ethnorelative perspective. On average, the teachers in this study operate at the Cultural Competence level. This is considered a high functioning level of cultural competency. As teachers shift from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative world view, they become aware of how their cultural perspective influences all intercultural interactions (Bennett, 1993; Lindsey, 1999). Thus, they are able to consider each culture they come across as both valid and viable (Bennett, 1993). Interestingly, this was confirmed by both the teacher self-reported data and students' perceptions of their teachers. This suggests that a causal agent influences international school teachers to be more culturally competent than their peers in U.S. based schools. While this study did not explore causation, it is recommended for further investigation.

In addition, an analysis of teacher and student perceptions of teacher cultural competency revealed a statistically strong relationship. Teachers who are more modest in their self-reports tended to be rated highly by students. Conversely, teachers who believed themselves to operate from a higher level of cultural competency were perceived to be in a much lower level by some students. It is curious that student and teacher perceptions of teacher cultural competency did not match up in a linear fashion. This finding speaks to the importance of including student or client perspectives when measuring cultural

competency. While this was not a primary focus of the study, it is an interesting finding and worthy of further exploration.

Researchers note the marked difference in levels of cultural competence between international school teachers and teachers in national or public school systems. This finding extends Jan Westrick and Celeste Yuen's (2007) study of teacher intercultural sensitivity in Hong Kong schools. Using the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), they also found that international school teachers largely operate from an ethnorelative perspective. Although the study employed a different instrument, the similarities in the results is an important consideration. This differs from the cultural competency results in national-based schools within the U.S. and Hong Kong, where teachers are spread across both the ethnocentric and ethnorelative halves of the continuum (Marks, 2011; Pauley, 2008; Westrick & Yuen, 2007). The preponderance of teachers in the national schools remain in the Cultural Blindness or Minimization stage. These teachers function from an ethnocentric worldview but incorrectly assume that they are culturally competent. Cultural Blindness is characterized by teachers who minimize cultural differences and celebrate commonalities. However, they are unaware that their own dominant cultural norms are defining what *normal* means.

A number of explanatory variables have been correlated with higher cultural competency in international school populations, such as experience living in other cultures, educational levels, fluency in the language of the host country, and age. However, these outcomes are the result of small, convenience samples and are limited in

their generalizability. While international school teachers generally maintain an ethnorelative world view, the source of higher international school teacher cultural competence has yet to be established.

The results of this study also indicate that international school work experience is not related to teacher cultural competency. This is a departure from previous studies where experience living in other cultures was a statistically strong predictor of overall intercultural competence (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992; Sims, 2011; Westrick & Yuen, 2007). Observation of the data indicate a weak association and ultimately, it was determined to be an insignificant relationship. It is possible that with a sample size less than 100, the statistical analysis did not detect the effect of international work experience. In addition, the teachers in this study averaged 11.63 years of international school teaching experience. With limited variation in the cultural competency rating variable and a high mean, this explanatory variable may have had inadequate variation. Prior studies included higher numbers of teachers in the first three years of international teaching experience, which alters the characteristic of the sample population. Furthermore, Bhawuk and Brislin attribute the initial three years abroad to predicting cultural competency (1992). The discrepancy between the result of this study and previous studies suggests that researchers should continue to explore this variable in studies where the international school faculty are overseas veterans.

The following series of three adventitious findings were discovered through an analysis of the teacher demographic variables. Educational level, the number of

languages spoken and multiple generations of Third Culture Kids in a family are all related to the cultural competency construct. While not directly related to the research questions, they yield additional information about the relationship between a teacher's life experience and their perceived level of cultural competency.

In this study, the attainment of a graduate level diploma is positively related to teacher cultural competency. This is the strongest predictor of teacher cultural competency within the study and expands upon a Westrick and Yuen's (2007) research. What is more, the study revealed a statistically significant positive association between the number of languages spoken fluently by a teacher and the Knowledge subconstruct of cultural competence. While this study did not specify whether the number of languages spoken included Cantonese or Mandarin, the result does build upon a previous finding among international school teachers in Latin America (Sims, 2011). Growing up as a Third Culture Kid over several generations also has a statistically significant positive relationship with the development of culturally competent attitudes. Although this particular variable has not been explored in previous research, this finding is related to Adult Third Culture Kid (ATCK) literature. Studies in this field suggest that ATCKs positively regard multiculturalism, living abroad, and internationalism (Boushe, 2009; Cottrell & Useem, 1994; Fail, 1995; Fail, 2002). These somewhat unexpected results underscore the complexity of the construct and a need for researchers to continue exploring the multiple dimensions related to cultural competency.

The research question, “What is the relationship between teachers’ cultural competency and their students’ engagement in the international school setting?” provides for two interesting and somewhat unanticipated results. Considering the teacher self-reports of cultural competency, there is no evidence of an association with student engagement. Upon further investigation, teacher cultural competency across all three subconstructs is considered to be statistically insignificant because there is not enough variance across the mean. This result is an important departure from assumptions within the cultural competency literature (Gay, 2010; Moule, 2012; Nieto & Booth, 2009). Since this study was an initial foray into the confluence of cultural competency and student engagement, there are no comparative studies. Thus, the conclusions drawn from this result are somewhat limited. Given the small sample size of paired teacher and student responses and the limitations of a self-report methodology, the lack of a significant correlation does not necessarily confirm that an association does not exist. It simply suggests that one should use caution in order not to overstate the influence of teacher cultural competency on student engagement.

Another fascinating finding emerged from the examination of cultural competency and student engagement. When looking at teacher cultural competency through the lens of students, an entirely different result unfolded. Students’ perceptions of teacher cultural competency and engagement demonstrate a strong positive relationship. The more favorably students regard their teacher’s cultural competency, the higher their self-reported engagement. This result holds across all subconstructs of engagement and did

not appear to be influenced by confounding variables. Similar to the previous finding, evidence does not exist to support or refute this relationship. Despite the strength of this correlation, the smaller convenience sample requires a tentative acceptance of the relationship between students' perceptions of teacher cultural competence and engagement. It is possible that a reciprocal or circular causation explains the result. To be sure, this relationship deserves further exploration through a discussion of its implications and additional research.

Implications of the Findings

The findings in this quantitative research study are rooted in cultural competence and student engagement frameworks. The study improves the understanding of both phenomena and has ramifications within the education sector. The following section delves into the contributions of this study to theory, research and practice.

Contributions to Theory

The results of this study support both the construct meaning and operational definition of cultural competency. Cultural competence is the capacity an individual has to adequately understand and learn culturally diverse meanings and behaviors. This happens in a dynamic social setting where internal and external cultural attributes are continually changing (Lum, 2011). When operationalized, educators see cultural competency as a set of congruent attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors that come together among professionals to enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross, 1988). This developmental process occurs along a continuum from

ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspectives (Hammer & Bennett, 1998; Lindsey, et al., 1999). Cultural competency is a complex and multifaceted framework and the continuum describes fundamental stages of development (Appendix A). Through an examination of the demographic analysis variables, this study deepens the cultural competence knowledge base.

The teachers in this sample reported a range of cultural competency levels including Cultural Precompetence, Cultural Competence, and Cultural Proficiency. The descriptive statistics also revealed that on average, the teachers operate from the Cultural Competence level. This stage is characterized by an ability to internalize two or more fairly complete cultural frames of reference and value other cultures as highly as their own. This supports an underlying assumption that teachers in international schools have a higher level of cultural competency than colleagues in national schools. However, one should exercise caution in interpreting this result because no previous data using the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire (MAQ) is available for comparison.

The statistical significance between teacher cultural competency and educational attainment, language acquisition, and generations of overseas provides additional support for the cultural competency model. As the level of educational attainment increases from an undergraduate degree to a graduate degree, the mean cultural competency score also increases. This finding extends a previous study set in Hong Kong where a teacher's educational level was determined to be a stronger predictor of intercultural sensitivity than experience living in other cultures (Westrick & Yuen, 2007).

The ability to speak more than one language fluently relates to culturally competent knowledge. This result coincides with the literature that describes a connection between culture and language. According to Benjamin Whorf, language shapes our conceptualization of the world (in Nieto & Booth, 2009). Words take on meaning when they are a representation of the speaker's world view, which likely accounts for the relationship between culture and language (Wink & Putney, 2002). The relationship between multiple language acquisition and the knowledge necessary to be culturally competent confirms this conclusion.

As teachers live overseas with their families for multiple generations, the attitudes necessary to reach a high level of cultural competency increase. While this finding is not directly grounded in previous research, it is in keeping with literature on Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs). Qualitative studies indicate that the multicultural upbringing of TCKs provides greater motivation to work abroad as adults, incorporate international aspects into their lives, marry cross-culturally and seek leadership roles in international settings (Boushe, 2009; Cottrell & Useem, 1994; Fail, 1995; Fail, 2002). The inclination to continue living overseas as adults suggests that ATCKs have a positive attitude towards leading culturally competent lives.

International schools are brimming with cultural diversity. Teachers interact with culturally different students, colleagues, parents and community members on a daily basis. The schools themselves seek intentional diversity through their admissions processes and encourage global citizenship within their mission statements. Through the

structure, geographic location, and diverse school community, there is an expectation that teachers are culturally competent without intentional professional development. This highlights an underlying assumption that culturally responsive teaching must happen simply because the school is *international*. Yet, cultural competency takes purposeful training and does not occur through happenstance.

To investigate this assumption, this study assigned experience in international schools as an explanatory variable to determine whether it maintains an association with cultural competency. Although the results revealed that a relationship does not exist within this sample, an interesting observation emerged from this exploration. The teachers in this sample have both a high level of cultural competence and are primarily veteran international school teachers. This may not be entirely unexpected given the increasingly globalized nature of our world. With shifting demographics in the U.S., Canada, Britain, and Australia more teachers have experience with culturally different groups before emigrating overseas. Moreover, statistically significant research suggests that over three years of experience abroad positively influences intercultural development (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Averaging over 11 years of international school experience, it may be difficult to determine a significant relationship between years of international teaching experience and cultural competency because most of these teachers are beyond their initial exposure to the international environment. With these considerations in mind, there is still an interesting pattern between seasoned international school teachers and

higher levels of cultural competency. Further research is needed to better understand this dynamic.

As Bennett (1993) suggests in the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), merely increasing exposure to cultural difference doesn't necessarily guarantee the development of cultural competences. Yet, the teachers in this sample are exposed to cultural difference and scored in the upper half of the cultural competency continuum. The students confirmed this observation by indicating that they believe their teachers operate primarily from an ethnorelative perspective. In fact, the students are more likely to place their teachers in the Cultural Proficiency stage than the teachers reported for themselves. It is important to note that this observation is not supported in the statistical analysis and does not imply causation. Rather this finding confirms Bennett's belief (1993) that experience with cultural difference does not guarantee increased cultural competency. However, the pattern is curious and deserves more attention.

The enquiry into cultural competency and student engagement provided substantive evidence in support of their respective frameworks. It turns out that accounting for both student and teacher perspectives may provide a better picture of teacher cultural competency than through self-reports alone. Given the limited nature of a self-report methodology, this study establishes that students' perceptions of their teacher's cultural competency maintains a strong association with student engagement. On the other hand, the teacher self-reports did not. Moreover, there is no correlation between

student and teacher perceptions of teacher cultural competency. This important finding lends credibility to the perspective that cultural competency is enmeshed within the teacher-student partnership. This is worthy of further research to fully understand the implications.

The most striking departure from the literature is the lack of a relationship between teacher self-reported cultural competency and student engagement. The underlying assumption is that all teachers, regardless of background, need to develop skills in multicultural communication and understanding. Their cultural knowledge and awareness along with their curricular and instructional accommodations, can make a major difference in student learning and engagement (Nieto & Bode, 2012). This supposition has significant implications for student success in school. Since both cultural competency and engagement are considered malleable, schools around the world have increased their focus on cultural competency to improve student learning (Moule, 2012; Skinner, in print). At first glance, this finding appears to derail the commonly held belief that more culturally competent educators are better able to engage students.

As mentioned, a different pattern develops when teacher cultural competency is examined through students' perceptions of their teachers. If a student perceives their teacher to be more culturally competent, their classroom engagement also increases. Thus, it is the *students' perceptions* of teacher cultural competency rather than teacher self-perceptions that are related to engagement. This relationship is sustained when demographic variables such as gender, ethnicity, years of international school experience,

and languages fluently spoken are accounted for statistically. Moreover, this relationship retains a positive correlation between all four subconstructs of student engagement: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement and Emotional Disaffection. The strength of the relationship between students' perceptions of teacher cultural competency and engagement is seen in its consistency across variables. This is a curious finding and yet makes sense in light of the importance of student-teacher rapport, the significant role student perception has on the learning experience, student engagement research and the recent push to include clients' perceptions when measuring cultural competency.

Upon close examination, the antecedents of student engagement and the products of teacher cultural competency are intertwined. High student engagement is associated with school bonding, a sense of belonging and value in the classroom, teacher support, relational trust and fulfillment of the need for relatedness (Finn, 1993; Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Ryan, Stiller & Lynch, 1994). In addition, a culturally competent teacher ensures that students feel that they belong. When teachers establish relational trust across cultural differences, students are likely to view the teacher as a culturally competent practitioner. They're also more likely to be engaged in the class because the teacher shows an unconditional positive regard for all students. To date, comparative research findings do not exist in cultural competency or student engagement literature. This provides for an area of exploration in both fields.

Recently, cultural competency scholars have focused on the egalitarian relationship between the worker and client, as a means to emphasize the interconnected nature of cultural competency (Lum, 2011). Others boldly state that it would be inappropriate to typecast a provider's cultural competency without seeking the client's perspective (Geron, 2002). One may argue that the person in the best position to make a judgment about a teacher's cultural competency is the student. The fact that students' perceptions of their teachers' cultural competency influences their classroom engagement supports the premise of a provider-client cultural competence relationship. An exploration of the relational and dialogical aspect of cultural competency would extend this initial finding.

This study also verifies that student engagement is a multidimensional construct. When measuring both teacher and student perception of cultural competency across student engagement, the results are consistent for each subconstruct. Teacher self-reported cultural competency does not bear a significant association with the aggregate student engagement score nor any of the four subconstructs (Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement, Emotional Disaffection). Yet, students' perceptions of teacher cultural competency does have a strong relationship with student engagement. The association occurs across all levels of the construct. This supports the theory that student engagement is a multifaceted construct. Thus, student engagement research should continue to include multiple dimensions in the instrumentation rather than limiting studies to a unidimensional construct (Skinner, in print).

Contributions to Research

This was the first study to explore the relationship between cultural competency and student engagement. Previous studies focus independently on either an exploration of teacher cultural competency or student engagement. A few studies delve into the relationship between cultural competency professional development and student achievement. However, they are limited by their qualitative design and small samples (Holocker, 2009; Wells-Rivers, 2011). This study provides empirical support for both cultural competency and student engagement fields with the use of the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire and the Student Engagement Survey (modeled after the Engagement versus Disaffection Student-Report) in an international school environment. The results of the MAQ and SES both followed a reasonably normal curve. The responses to the MAQ are framed around the Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes associated with the cultural competency framework. Likewise, the responses to the SES were congruent with four subconstructs of student engagement: Behavioral Engagement, Behavioral Disaffection, Emotional Engagement and Emotional Disaffection. In all instances, engagement and disaffection were inversely related. As students report higher engagement, they also report lower levels of disaffection. This expected result favors the multidimensional student engagement construct and should be included in further studies.

A strength in the research design was measuring both teacher self-reports and students' perceptions of teacher cultural competency. Scott Geron (2002) strongly urged researchers to include client evaluation of their provider's cultural competency. He stated

that one of the biggest weaknesses of current cultural competency measures is that they are based solely on self-reports by the practitioners. With a complex construct such as cultural competency, it makes intuitive sense to examine both the teacher and student perceptions of teacher cultural competency together. Teachers are subject to social desirability bias and perceived cultural competence may not reflect students' actual experiences in the classroom. Students who have not studied multicultural or culturally responsive pedagogy are not expected to evaluate cross-cultural experiences in the same way that a professional educator would. This research study provides a small first step towards joining teacher and student perceptions of teacher cultural competency to obtain a full picture of the classroom experience.

In addition, this study considered a variety of demographic analysis variables. Future researchers in teacher cultural competency should control for educational level, languages fluently spoken, and backgrounds of ATCKs. Since international experience produces conflicting results, researchers should also continue to control for both experience overseas and experience working in international schools. Future researchers in student engagement should continue to control for age because this study reveals a significant correlation between age and increased Behavioral Engagement.

The classroom engagement aspect of this research was an initial study of engagement within international schools. Although the context for this study is set within diverse private school communities, the findings fully support student engagement research. Teacher support and fulfilling the need for relatedness are predictors of high

emotional engagement (Fredricks, et al., 2004). This is because students feel as though they belong in the classroom and have a sense of security. The results of the Student Engagement Survey confirm these assertions and indicate that student engagement is tied to perceptions of teacher cultural competency.

The prevalent school engagement research focuses on high risk populations, drop out rates, and a lack of connection with schools (National Center for School Engagement, 2006). Fewer studies examine engagement within high performing schools and fewer still in the international school arena. While the study of student engagement among high risk students is of the utmost importance, researchers should continue to study student engagement within diverse school contexts. This allows for a greater understanding of student engagement and provides further insight into methods for teachers to increase engagement.

Finally, this research study follows the self-report methodology used in previous cultural competency and student engagement studies. The online survey method is easy to administer, allows for efficient data collection and opens up the sample size to a wider demographic. However, it lacks the depth that a mixed methodology would provide. With triangulation, there are multiple ways of observing the data and allows for an intensive study of the variables.

Contributions to Practice

This study informs the policies, instructional practices, curriculum and professional development opportunities within international schools. A crucial aspect of

this study was an analysis of the difference in teacher cultural competency across educational level, ability to speak multiple languages and generations lived overseas. These statistically significant relationships have implications for teacher recruitment. International schools are culturally diverse both in design and practice. With upwards of 15 reported nationalities among teachers and over 40 reported student nationalities, teacher candidates must be able to function effectively in a culturally diverse work environment. They must have the right skills to live and work in a multicultural, multinational and multilingual lifestyle (Russell & Larrison, 2000). In response, Sonia Nieto and Patty Bode (2012) suggest that schools must recruit teachers who share the cultural background of their students. However, in the international school context this may not be practical because of the immense diversity within the student body. Rather, recruiters may look to cultural competence as a factor within the hiring process.

Robert Sim's (2011) research on cultural intelligence and teacher retention indicates that cultural intelligence does predict job satisfaction. It stands to reason that recruiters should consider cultural competency as a factor within the hiring process. While graduate degrees, fluently speaking more than one language and an international upbringing are not necessarily factors that determine cultural competency, a relationship does exist. It would be prudent to consider these characteristics during the screening process. Clearly these are not the only or most important criteria in hiring new teachers but should be considered when recruiting culturally competent teachers. The *Teach Overseas Information Handbook* provides anecdotal advice from successful international

school teachers. Five of these statements are directly related to cultural competency development and have implications for teacher recruitment:

1. Be aware of the expectations and assumptions you bring with you. These color your perceptions and, in turn, affect your reactions and behavior.
2. Observe how people live and do things. Develop a sensitive method of inquiry into why and how things are done. Be slow to make value judgments.
3. Be prepared to explain cultural differences. Society can be interpreted to others in a way that their own teachers cannot.
4. Be skeptical of the sense of exoticism that will surround you. Neither pose as an expert nor try to become one.
5. Be patient and avoid arrogance; this can be the best advice you ever receive.

(International School Services, 1997)

Within the classroom, there is a strong case for culturally responsive instruction based on the results of this study. Students who perceive their teachers to be culturally competent are also more engaged in the class. This is evidenced through teachers' interactions with culturally diverse students, the use of culturally diverse examples in instruction, high expectations for students regardless of cultural background, and respect of each student's culture equally. Furthermore, this research supports the effort to put students at the center of the learning and pedagogical decisions. Practicing culturally responsive instruction without consideration for the students' perspectives would be an exercise in futility. Culturally responsive pedagogy validates, facilitates, liberates, and empowers ethnically diverse students by simultaneously cultivating their cultural integrity, individual abilities, and academic success (Gay, 2010).

Two prominent scholars in culturally responsive pedagogy have used current culturally competent theory, research and literature to develop models for cross-cultural instruction (Gay, 2010; Moule, 2012). Underlying both of their approaches is the importance of caring, complimented with content and pedagogical competence, personal and professional confidence, and moral and ethical conviction (Gay, 2010). There are a number of culturally responsive instructional strategies and approaches outlined in the literature. Practitioners may wish to reference scholars such as Geneva Gay, Jean Moule, Linda Darling-Hammond, James Banks and Sonia Nieto for additional strategies. At the core of their work is a necessity for a rigorous, equitable and relevant student centered approach that emphasizes relationships and community. Jean Moule puts forth several principles of successful cross-cultural teaching based on Ellis Cose's (1997) research at Xavier University. These include:

- 1) Use a student centered approach to find a way of motivating young people.
- 2) Convince them that you believe in them.
- 3) Teach them life long learning skills like the art of studying in groups.
- 4) Challenge them with difficult and practical material.
- 5) Give them adequate support.
- 6) Demand that they perform. (Cose, 1997)

The six aspects of cross-cultural instruction cut through the nuances of culturally responsive pedagogy and are central to the education of culturally diverse students. These

actionable items can be incorporated into international school teachers' practice with professional development and guidance. Once these are in place, teachers may look towards additional skills such as ensuring the curriculum content, learning climate, instructional strategies, and interpersonal interactions reflect the cultures, experiences, and perspectives of culturally different students (Gay, 2010). A culturally responsive curriculum supports and is supported by the research findings in this study. The fact that students noted a relationship between perceived teacher cultural competence and engagement further demonstrates the value of eliciting feedback from the client.

To establish a culturally competent practice, educational practitioners need professional development. As Gay (2010) points out, "Good intentions and awareness are not enough to cause the changes needed to promote culturally responsive instruction in educational programs." The research on international school teachers' cultural competency and intercultural sensitivity indicates that they are in a range of developmental levels. Just as the classroom experience cannot be tailored in a one-size-fits all model, neither can the professional development structure. School administrators should consider providing a differentiated cultural competence workshop model so that teachers may cultivate their cross-cultural instruction skills at the appropriate level. In addition, professional development offerings must follow best practice in the cultural competency framework through an inside-out approach. This is a potentially life-changing experience and requires serious commitment to work through both the emotional aspect as well as the classroom applications.

Perhaps the greatest contribution to practice is redirecting pedagogical energy back to the relationship between teacher and student. Interpersonal connections are central to the positive association between student perception of teacher cultural competence and engagement in this study. The result speaks to the importance of a teacher's strong rapport with his or her students. In Doman Lum's synopsis of cultural competency, one can see how relationship cannot be overlooked in this work.

Cultural competence is a relational, dialogical process (a dialogue rather than an emphasis on worker's competence) between the worker and the client, between cultures, and between people and context. Dialogue means conversation, interchange, discussion, and mutual understanding involving an egalitarian relationship of equal status and rights. (Lum, 2011)

Clearly, cultural competence does not happen in isolation. The very foundation of the cultural competency field assumes a social setting where culturally diverse people are interacting. The international school community characterizes this multicultural setting and educators must pay particular attention to the development of strong intercultural relationship to ensure student success.

The quality of interpersonal relationships has a tremendous affect on the caliber of teaching and learning (Gay, 2011). Strong student-teacher relationships are linked with students' emotional, behavioral and cognitive engagement in the classroom. Students who feel supported, cared for, and valued feel a sense of connection with their teacher and are much more likely to perform. Developing a high quality relationship with students

requires that an international school teacher understand the cultural interaction styles of their students so that they can ensure a safe, comfortable classroom climate.

Moule (2012) describes two basic principles for establishing a sound multicultural classroom regardless of cultural specifics. Teachers give each student permanent value through their consideration for the individual. No matter what behaviors they may act upon, the teacher always demonstrates a deep-seated value for the individual. In addition, the teacher expresses unconditional positive regard for his or her students. Teachers must understand that this depends on the teacher's own cultural values and personal philosophy. Yet, when they recognize the innate value of their students, their students understand that there is an unselfish desire for each individual to do their best (Dreikurs, 1968). This frees the students to take positive risks and to engage deeply in their learning. When a sense of positive regard is experienced by culturally diverse students, they are likely to view their teacher as culturally competent. While this is speculative, the findings in this study support the importance of a positive connection between students and teachers.

Limitations of This Study

This study has several limitations due to internal validity concerns. The non-experimental design did not involve a random assignment of the explanatory variables: demographic controls, teacher cultural competency (self-perception), or teacher cultural competency (student perception). Thus, the conclusions in this study cannot describe causality. Controlling for confound variables such as gender, age, experience overseas,

subject areas taught, number of languages spoken, generations overseas, educational level, and age contributed to the strength of the study but still do not permit causal statements.

Results related to the explanatory variable, teacher cultural competency, suggests additional issues with internal validity. Teacher self-reported cultural competency did not bear a statistically significant relationship with student engagement. It is possible that a confounding variable prevented an accurate depiction of the association between teacher self-reports of cultural competence and student engagement. For example, a departmental team may have worked through cross-cultural issues a short time before the survey administration. Thus, teacher data from that team may not be an accurate reflection of their cultural competency. Similarly, recent professional development or professional reading in cultural competency may influence the results.

On the other hand, students' reports of teacher cultural competency did have a statistically significant relationship with student engagement. This may be the result of reverse causation. Higher student engagement may have caused the students to perceive their teachers as more culturally competent. An alternative explanation is circular causation where increased student perception of teacher cultural competence caused a change in student engagement, which then influenced perceptions of teacher cultural competence. If either reverse or circular causation occurred, a false correlation between the two variables may have appeared in the results. Since the research design did not

include a manipulation of teacher cultural competency, the findings do not explain why some students are more engaged than others.

The non-experimental design of this study also reduces the generalizability because of issues with external validity. The methodology employed a small convenience sample of international high school teachers and students. The response rate for teachers was 81% and the response rate for students was 63%. While it was encouraging to see that 70 teachers and 525 students were willing to participate in the study, the findings cannot be generalized far beyond this sample. The sample is limited to international school teachers and students in Hong Kong. Future studies would benefit from expanding to other international schools and providing additional motivation for a participation.

The sample size was further reduced in the statistical analysis for research question three. Due to scheduling conflicts, external examination preparation, and teachers who either forgot and declined to administer the student survey in their class, there were only 43 sets of teacher and student data. In other words, 70 teachers completed the Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire and 38 teachers did not have complimentary student engagement data to run statistical analyses for the third research question. This reduced sample size placed considerable constraints on the correlational and regression analysis between teacher cultural competency and student engagement.

There were further limitations regarding measurement issues within this study. Self-reports were used as a substitute for observable behavior and this method is prone to social desirability bias. The Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) was used to

measure teachers' perceptions about their own cultural competency. While this instrument proved to be reasonably reliable and valid, the effectiveness of this survey may be called into question because the respondents' total scale scores indicate positive or strongly positive perceptions of cultural competency. None of the teachers leveled in the Cultural Incapacity or Cultural Blindness stages, which may be considered unusual within a diverse sample of teachers. This leads one to speculate that the sample was biased because of the conditions of employment at an international school. It is possible that respondents were more likely to have a positive self-perception of the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for cultural competency because they work in an international school environment. The teachers who perceive themselves as less competent may have selected out of the survey. Moreover, the respondents may have chosen more positive responses because they believe it is an expected response at their school. A further investigation of why teachers chose not to respond may provide more telling information about international school teachers' cultural competency.

Besides social desirability bias, teachers and students may have experienced stereotype threat. In this study, individuals with stigmatized identity along race, ethnicity, nationality, and gender may contend with self-evaluative implications (Steele & Aronson, 1995). By identifying themselves through the demographic questions, may have responded to the surveys in a manner that characterizes a stereotype. It is possible that stereotype threat compromised the validity of the surveys due to participant distraction, narrowed attention, anxiety, self-consciousness, withdrawal of effort, or over-effort

(Baumeister, 1984). The correlational analyses between demographic analysis variables and both teacher cultural competency and student engagement did not show variance across the means. It is generally assumed that stereotype threat did not violate the validity of the study. However, it may have had an influence over the participants' responses.

The findings of this study should be viewed as an initial exploration of the relationship between cultural competency and student engagement. As a first step, these findings must be examined within the context of similar studies using high school teachers and students in different school settings. In addition, further studies should seek a larger sample size to generalize the findings. Repeating this study with the Student Engagement Survey as an assessment tool may be useful as a guide for students' experience in the classroom and their perception of their teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

Cultural competence and culturally competent practice is both complex and comprehensive. It has many miles to go before reaching maturity as a scientifically respectable social science within helping systems (Lum, 2012). This study was an initial exploration of the relationship between teacher cultural competency and student engagement. The results of this study support the theoretical and conceptual foundation of Bennett (1993) and Lindsey's (1999) cultural competency frameworks. Since this is the first study of cultural competency to include both high school students and teachers in an international school setting, there is no equivalent sample for comparison. Thus, determining whether the results of this sample are significantly higher or lower for a

similar population is not possible. It is suggested that further research with this population be done with other national and international high schools for comparison purposes. In addition, a mixed methodology design would contribute to the depth of the conclusions regarding associations between cultural competency and student engagement.

An additional area for further research is based in research question three. This question, “What is the relationship between teachers’ cultural competency and their students’ engagement in the international school setting?” did not show a statistically significant difference between teacher self-reported cultural competency and their students’ engagement. However, a weak association was noted. Due to a small sample size of paired teacher and student results, it is worth replicating this study with a larger sample in another international school setting. Determining if the lack of a significant relationship between teacher self-reported cultural competency and student engagement remains consistent in future studies will inform curricular decisions in schools.

Educational researchers may consider exploring cultural competency outside of the classroom environment. While the results of this study indicate that international school teachers operate at a high level of cultural competency, is this mirrored among international school administrators? Recent literature and measurement tools point to the significant role that school leaders play in the development of culturally competent systems. In the international school system where leaders interact with culturally different students, teachers, administrative colleagues, parents, and community members it stands

to reason that culturally competent leaders may be more effective. Lindsey, et al.'s (1999) manual for school leaders walks administrators through the change necessary to move a school towards cultural proficiency. An exploration of international schools as culturally proficient organizations has yet to emerge among the research literature.

Considering that an international upbringing with multiple generations of ATCKs is associated with increased culturally competent attitudes, researchers may wish to examine the relationship between a teacher's upbringing as a TCK and their cultural competence. Straffon's (2001) confirmed the assumption that international school students also have a high level of intercultural sensitivity. Looking further, it is worth exploring whether this translates into being a culturally competent adult. One wonders if ATCKs that chose to entry the teaching profession are they more equipped to work effectively with culturally diverse students.

Finally, research into power and privilege in the international school community may bring further clarity to the role cultural competency plays in this multinational setting. Cultural competency work has increased rapidly in the United States over the last two decades. However, it is relatively new to the international school arena. Thus, this work is grounded in historical issues prevalent to the United States: racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. Understandably, there is a strong push for American educators to build a repertoire of culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995) but this holds equal relevance in international school communities. Although located outside of the United States, nearly all international schools are structured within the Western

paradigm of schooling. In addition, the histories of many of the host nations are characterized by colonialism, oppression, privilege and power. The deep seated challenges caused by inequitable treatment of culturally different people suggests that social injustices are perpetuated in international schools. While international school families are primarily affluent, they are still impacted by issues related to gender stereotypes, ethnicities, nationalities, homophobia, and ability.

As private expatriate institutions, families choose to enroll their children into international schools with a curriculum that is predominantly European and middle class in origin. This structure has been sustained within international schools since their emergence in the early 1900s. The Eurocentric approach is so deeply ingrained in the ethos, programs, and etiquette of the schools that it is considered the *normal* and *right* thing to do (Gay, 2010). The hidden curriculum of international schools perpetuates this paradigm. Without a curriculum that addresses issues of power and privilege, international schools may miss the opportunity to empower students in changing the dynamic of social injustice.

International school students are advantaged because they are in a position to continue their families' upward mobility and many are likely to secure careers in global leadership. While they are not marginalized in many regards, it is vitally important for these students to understand systemic oppression. Looking towards the future, ATCKs have an opportunity to take on an active role in supporting the development of cultural competency and will have the opportunity to change patterns of injustice. They are in a

unique position to make a significant impact in our increasingly interconnected world. In order to achieve this, both students and their teachers must further develop their cultural competency through an understanding the complexity of privilege and power.

The ramifications of hierarchical power, oppression, and privilege in the international school context has yet to be investigated. As cultural competency studies continue in the international school arena, it would be beneficial to examine the underlying issues that influence cultural competency in these communities. Without a thorough understanding of privilege and power, the teachers and students in international schools may participate in a sanitized multicultural experience.

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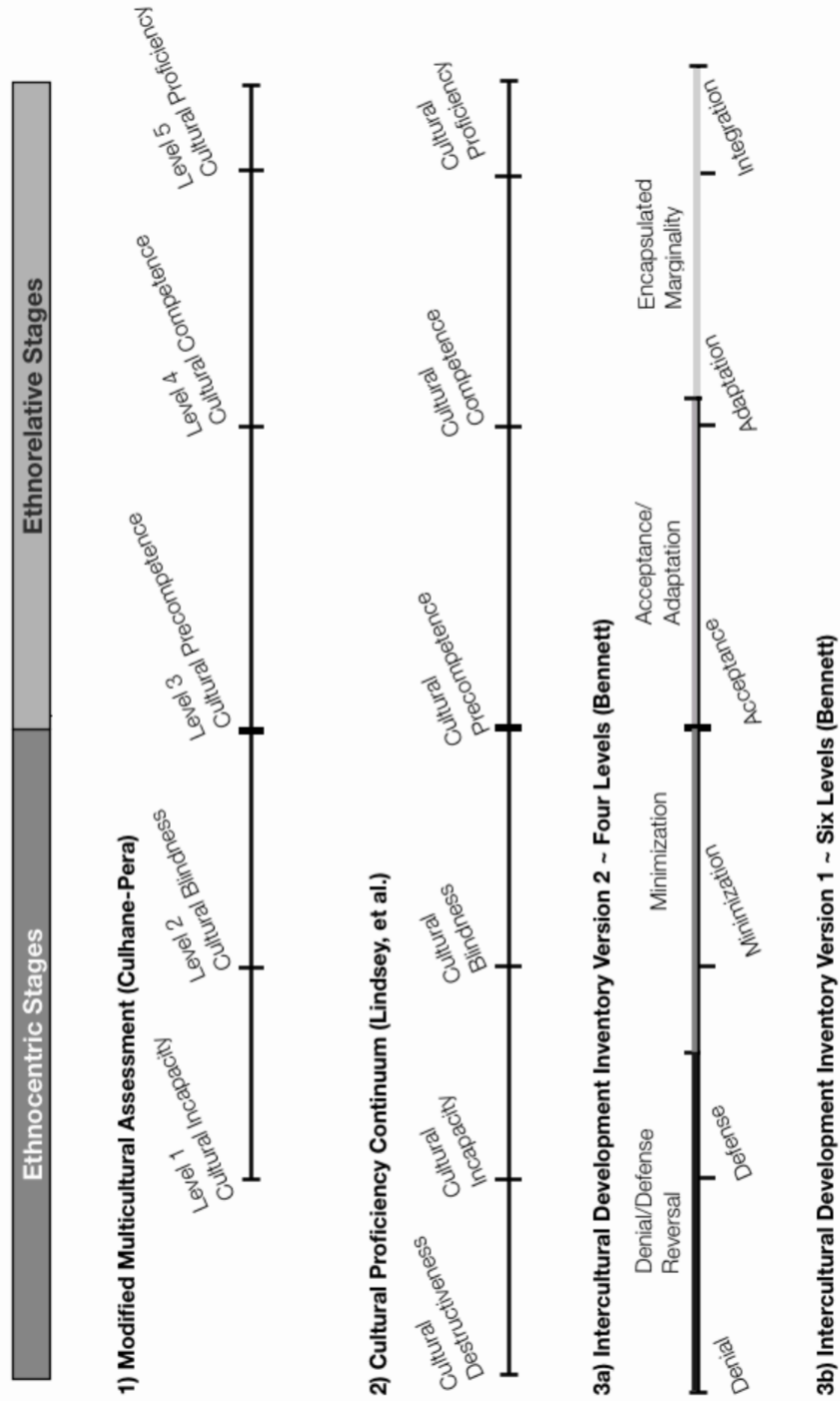
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Appendices

Appendix A

DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY



Appendix B

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

1. Introduction to the Research Survey

University of Denver Doctoral Research Survey

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Erin Robinson, a doctoral candidate, from the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver. The results will be used in generating data for a doctoral dissertation study in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the PhD program. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently employed at a participating international high school in Hong Kong.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to measure the relationship between teachers' cultural competency and their student engagement within international high schools in Hong Kong. Cultural competency is defined as a combination of knowledge about cultural groups as well as attitudes towards and skills for dealing with cultural diversity (Betancourt, 2003). Various demographic factors as well as students' self-reported engagement in class will be evaluated with reference to the Multicultural Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) developed by Culhane-Pera and colleagues (1997).

PROCEDURES

Participation in this study should take about 20 minutes of your time. Participation will involve responding to 11 demographic questions and 27 questions regarding self-perceptions of cultural competency in this online survey. You may supply your email to register for a drawing of four gift certificates and an iPad.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the survey at any time. Refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Responses to the study will be anonymously coded and an identifying data will be kept separate. Email addresses for the optional drawing will be kept separate from other data.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Individual participants may not benefit directly from participating in the study. However, there are indirect benefits. Teachers are likely to reflect on their own level cultural competency and the interplay with their teaching practice. The relationship between teachers' cultural competency and student engagement has significant implications for professional development, culturally responsive instruction, hiring practices, and further research.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There is no compensation for participation, apart from the optional drawing.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses will be identified by code number only and will be kept separate from information that could identify you. This is done to protect the confidentiality of your responses. Only the researcher will have access to your individual data and any reports generated as a result of this study will use only group averages and paraphrased wording. However, should any information contained in this study be the subject of a court order or lawful subpoena, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study, while greatly appreciated, is entirely voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Participation or non-participation will not effect your employment status or any other personal consideration or right you usually expect. You may refuse to answer any question, which will effectively withdraw you from the survey without penalty. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which in the opinion of the researcher warrant doing so.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any question or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator: Erin Robinson; erobinsondu@gmail.com; +852-9312-2610
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kent Seidel; kent.seidel@du.edu; +1-303-871-2496

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

2. Consent to Participate

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the administration of this survey, you may contact Paul Oik, the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Chair at +1-303-871-4531. You may also write him at University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd, Denver, CO 80208. In addition, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by calling +1-303-871-4050 or emailing du-irb@du.edu.

CONSENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read and understood the foregoing descriptions of the study called, "The Relationship between Teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement". I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time. I understand that I can print out and retain a copy of this form.

If you do not understand any part of the above statement, please ask the researcher any questions you have.

By clicking the "Continue" button, I give my consent for the data from my survey to be used for the purposes of research by the investigator.

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

3. Researcher Confirmation of Consent

STATEMENT AND SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possess the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Erin Nicole Robinson
Signature of Investigator

6 February 2012

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

4. Demographic Questions

The following questions are demographic questions relating to you and your background. Please choose the most accurate response to each question:

***1. The coded teacher number provided by my school administrator:**

***2. Gender**

***3. Ethnicity (you may choose multiple boxes)**

- ☐ African
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Caucasian (European Descent)
- ☐ Central / Southern Asian
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ North African / Middle Eastern
- ☐ Northeast Asian
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ Southeast Asian

Another Ethnicity or Multi-ethnic (please specify)

***4. Nationality (where you hold a passport; you may choose multiple boxes)**

- ☐ American (US)
- ☐ Australian
- ☐ British
- ☐ Canadian
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Chinese with dual Hong Kong SAR Passport
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Singaporean

Other (if your nationality isn't listed, please write your nationality here)

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

*5. Age

- ☐ 20-29
 ☐ 30-39
 ☐ 40-49
 ☐ 50-59
 ☐ 60 or older

*6. Total Number of Years Living Overseas

- ☐ 0-1
 ☐ 2-5
 ☐ 6-10
 ☐ 11-15
 ☐ 16 or more

*7. Years of international school teaching experience (provide numeric response)

*8. Highest level of education completed

- ☐ Bachelors
 ☐ Masters
 ☐ Doctorate

*9. Number of languages spoken fluently

- ☐ 1
 ☐ 2
 ☐ 3
 ☐ 4
 ☐ 5 or more

*10. Number of generations my family has been overseas

- ☐ 0 (I am from Hong Kong and have never lived overseas)
☐ 1 (I moved overseas as an adult)
☐ 2 (My parents raised me overseas as a Third Culture Kid)
☐ 3 (At least one parent grew up overseas as a Third Culture Kid with a grandparent)
☐ 4 (At least one grandparent grew up overseas as a Third Culture Kid with a great grandparent)

Other (please specify)

*11. The primary subject area I currently teach at this school:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Business/Economics | <input type="radio"/> Social Studies/History |
| <input type="radio"/> ESL (English Support) | <input type="radio"/> Special Education |
| <input type="radio"/> Language Arts | <input type="radio"/> Technology |
| <input type="radio"/> Math | <input type="radio"/> Theory of Knowledge |
| <input type="radio"/> Performing Arts | <input type="radio"/> Visual Arts |
| <input type="radio"/> Physical Education/Health | <input type="radio"/> World Languages |
| <input type="radio"/> Science | |

Other (please specify)

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

5. Knowledge

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities.

Select the answer that BEST describes what YOU REALLY KNOW.

(1 = disagree; 5 = agree)

*** 12. I know the definition of culture and can list various factors that influence culture.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 13. I can describe the educational beliefs, values, and behaviors of five cultural groups within my classes.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 14. I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 15. I can discuss the important cultural influences of all my students.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 16. I can describe cultural negotiation processes.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 17. I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 18. I can describe three traditional educational practices of three ethnic groups.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 19. I can describe five basic principles of culturally responsive instruction.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

*** 20. I know the rules of (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

6. Skill

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities.
Select the answer that BEST describes what YOU REALLY DO.
(1 = disagree; 5 = agree)

***21. I inquire about pertinent beliefs, practices, and values for students and families.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***22. I obtain each student's personal and academic history, considering cultural information.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***23. I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***24. I adjust instructional strategies to fit my students' cultures.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***25. I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***26. I modify assessment and instructional approaches to meet the needs of cultural groups represented in my class(es).**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***27. I work with English Language Learners in an effective manner.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***28. I use general cultural information as considerations in my teaching practice, not as stereotypes.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***29. I actively support students' wishes, even if they run counter to prevailing educational research.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***30. I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

Multicultural Awareness Questionnaire

7. Attitude

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your capabilities.
Select the answer that BEST describes you AS YOU REALLY ARE.
(1 = disagree; 5 = agree)

***31. I actively respect students' and families' behaviors and values in all aspects of my teaching practice.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***32. I am ware of the influence of socio-cultural factors on students, educators, the classroom experience, and interpersonal relationships.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

33. I am aware that students from different cultural backgrounds and I may not share the same ethical values.

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***34. I appreciate the heterogeneity that exists within and across all cultural groups and the need to avoid over-generalizations.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***35. I am aware of my own cultural beliefs, values, and practices which influence self as a cultural person.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***36. I am confident that I can teach students from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***37. I believe that instruction is characterized by the use of culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning, and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

8. Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and help in completing this research.

If you would like to enter the drawing for one of four Gift Certificates and an iPad, please continue to the next page. There, you may enter your email address (this is separate from your responses). Winners will be contacted by email in April 2012. If you do not want to participate, you may close the window.

Again, thank you for you help and best of luck with your school year.

Appendix C

Student Engagement Survey

1. Introduction to the Research Survey

University of Denver Doctoral Research Survey

STUDENT ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a research study of teacher cultural competency and student engagement. You were selected as a possible participant because you are currently a student attending an international high school in Hong Kong. Prior to this survey administration, you and your parent signed a consent form to participate. If not, please stop here.

This study is being conducted by Erin Robinson, who is working on a Ph.D. from the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver. The results of this study will be used in a doctoral dissertation study, which is part of the Ph.D. program.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between teacher cultural competency and student engagement within international high schools in Hong Kong. Cultural competency includes the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to work with culturally diverse people. In the classroom, this means that an educator successfully teaches culturally diverse students. Various demographic factors and students' self-reported engagement in class will be evaluated.

PROCEDURES

Participation in this study should take about 15 minutes of your class time. Participation will involve responding to 9 demographic and 35 questions regarding your perceptions of class engagement. You will be asked to complete this survey in two different classes.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The risks associated with this project are minimal. If, however, you experience discomfort you may discontinue the survey at any time. You will not be penalized if you choose not to participate. You may talk with your school counselor if you feel any distress.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

Other than self-reflection about your engagement in this class, there are no direct benefits to participating. However, there are indirect benefits. The relationship between teachers' cultural competency and student engagement is important for teacher instruction, professional development and further research.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses will be anonymous and only the researcher has access to the data. Reports generated will only include generalized information. However, if any information contained in this study is subject to a lawful court order, the University of Denver will need to comply with that court order. Although no questions in this survey address it, any information revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse or neglect, will be reported.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may refuse to answer any question, which will withdraw you from the survey without penalty.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any question or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Principal Investigator: Erin Robinson; erobinsondu@gmail.com; +852-9312-2610

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kent Seidel; kent.seidel@du.edu; +1-303-871-2496

Student Engagement Survey

2. Assent to Participate

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this research study.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the administration of this survey, you may contact Paul Olk, the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Chair at +1-303-871-4531. You may also write him at University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd, Denver, CO 80208. In addition, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by calling +1-303-871-4050 or emailing du-irb@du.edu.

ASSENT OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the above information and received satisfactory responses for all my questions. I assent to participate in the study, "The Relationship between Teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement". I understand that I may withdraw my assent at any time and can print out and retain a copy of this form.

By clicking the "Continue" button, I give my assent for the data from my survey to be used for the purposes of research by the investigator.

Student Engagement Survey

3. Researcher Confirmation of Assent

STATEMENT AND SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

In my judgment the participant is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed assent and possess the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Erin Nicole Robinson
Signature of Investigator

6 February 2012

Student Engagement Survey

4. Demographic Questions

The following questions are demographic questions relating to you and your background. Please choose the most accurate response to each question.

In this survey, "overseas" means living in a country different from where you hold your passport.

***1. This classroom teacher's coded number is _____.**

***2. Gender**

***3. Ethnicity (you may choose multiple boxes)**

- ☐ African
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Caucasian (European Descent)
- ☐ Central / Southern Asian
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ North African / Middle Eastern
- ☐ Northeast Asian
- ☐ Pacific Islander
- ☐ Southeast Asian
- ☐ My ethnicity isn't listed (please check and write in below)

Another Ethnicity or Multi-ethnic (please specify)

Student Engagement Survey

*4. Nationality (where you hold a passport; you may choose multiple boxes)

- ☐ American (US)
☐ Australian
☐ British
☐ Canadian
☐ Chinese
☐ Chinese with dual Hong Kong SAR Passport
☐ Indian
☐ Japanese
☐ Korean
☐ Singaporean
☐ Other (please check if your nationality isn't listed and then write it in below)

Other (please specify)

*5. Age

- ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18 ☐ 19

*6. Years Living Overseas

- ☐ 0-1 ☐ 2-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16 or more

*7. Years attending an international school. This includes preschool, reception 1 and reception 2. Provide a numeric response.

*8. Number of languages spoken fluently

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more

*9. Number of generations my family has been overseas

- ☐ 0 (I am from Hong Kong, therefore not living overseas)
☐ 1 (I moved overseas with my parents and they did not grow up overseas)
☐ 2 (At least one parent grew up overseas)
☐ 3 (At least one grandparent lived overseas)
☐ Other (If your family has been overseas for more than 3 generations, please check here and write in below)

Other (please specify)

Student Engagement Survey

5. Engagement in Learning

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your engagement.
Select the answer that BEST describes what YOU REALLY FEEL.
(1 = disagree; 5 = agree)

***10. I try hard to do well in this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***11. I enjoy learning new things in this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***12. When we work on something in class, I feel discouraged.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***13. In this class, I do just enough to get by.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***14. When I'm in this class, I participate in class discussions.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***15. This class is fun.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***16. In this class, I work as hard as I can.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***17. When I'm in this class, I feel bad.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***18. When I'm in class, I listen very carefully.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***19. When I'm in this class, I feel worried.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***20. When we work on something in this class, I get involved.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***21. When I start something new in this class, I feel nervous.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

Student Engagement Survey

***22. When I'm in this class, I think about other things.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***23. I feel like I don't fit into this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***24. When we work on something in this class, I feel interested.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***25. I would drop this class if I would NOT face any consequences.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***26. When I'm in this class, I just act like I'm working.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***27. When I'm in class, I feel good.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***28. When I'm in this class, my mind wanders.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***29. I usually look forward to attending this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***30. When we work on something in this class, I feel bored.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***31. In this class, I make very little effort to do well.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***32. When I get stuck on a problem, I know that my teacher will support me.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***33. When I'm working on my classwork, I feel frustrated.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***34. When I'm in this class, I just act like I'm working.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***35. My teacher respects me.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***36. My teacher helps me to be successful in this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***37. I pay attention in this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

Student Engagement Survey

6. Cultural Competency

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your experiences with the teacher in this class.
Select the answer that BEST describes what YOU REALLY EXPERIENCE.
(1 = disagree; 5 = agree)

***38. This teacher uses culturally diverse examples when teaching.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***39. This teacher treats students from his/her culture better than students from other cultures.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***40. This teacher holds high expectations for all students, regardless of cultural background.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***41. Conflicts occur in this class because the teacher and students come from different cultures.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***42. This teacher values the cultural commonalities and differences among students in this class.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

***43. This teacher respects my cultural background.**

☐ disagree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ uncertain ☐ somewhat agree ☐ agree

7. Self-Rating

Read each statement and select the response that best describes your current engagement in this class.
Select the answer that BEST describes you AS YOU REALLY ARE.

***44. Given the following statements, which best reflects you?**

- ☐ I am never engaged in this class.
- ☐ I am sometimes engaged in this class.
- ☐ I am usually engaged in this class.
- ☐ I am always engaged in this class.

8. Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey and help in completing this research! Please remember that if this survey raised any concerns for you, you can seek out your school counselor, administrator, or teacher. Again, thank you for participating.

Appendix D

**Teacher Cultural Competence
& Student Engagement**

Dear Parents and Students,

HKIS high school students are invited to participate in the study, “The Relationship between Teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement.” You were selected as a possible participant because HKIS is participating in the study. Please read the following information before agreeing to participate.

This study will explore the relationship between teacher cultural competency and student engagement. Cultural competency includes the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to work with culturally diverse people. In the classroom, this means that an educator successfully teaches culturally diverse students.

The study is conducted by Erin Robinson, a doctoral student at the University of Denver. You may contact her with any questions at: +852-9312-2610 (mobile) or erobinsondu@gmail.com. The project is supervised by Dr. Kent Seidel, a faculty advisor at the University of Denver. He may be reached at: +1-303-871-2496 (office) or kent.seidel@du.edu.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participating students will complete an online Student Engagement Survey at the beginning of two different class periods. Each online survey will take about 10-15 minutes. The survey includes demographic questions and 35 classroom engagement questions. The demographic questions include: gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, number of languages spoken, years attending international schools and years living overseas.

The risks associated with this project are minimal. At any time, a student may choose not to participate or discontinue the survey without penalty. Students may talk to their school counselor if they feel any discomfort. Other than self-reflection, there is no direct benefit for student participation.

Student responses are anonymous and only the researcher has access to the data. Reports generated will only include generalized information. However, if any information contained in this study is subject to a lawful court order, the University of Denver will need to comply with that court order. Although no questions in this survey address it, any information revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse or neglect, will be reported.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the survey administration, you may contact Paul Olk, the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects Chair at +1-303-871-4531. You may also write him at University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd, Denver, CO 80208. In addition, you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by calling +1-303-871-4050 or emailing du-irb@du.edu.

Consent

I have read the above information and received satisfactory responses for all my questions. I consent to participate in the study, “The Relationship between Teacher Cultural Competency and Student Engagement.” I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time and I received a copy of this consent form (keep the following page).

Parent/Guardian Name:	_____	Date:	_____
Signature:	_____		
Student Name:	_____	Date:	_____
Signature:	_____		